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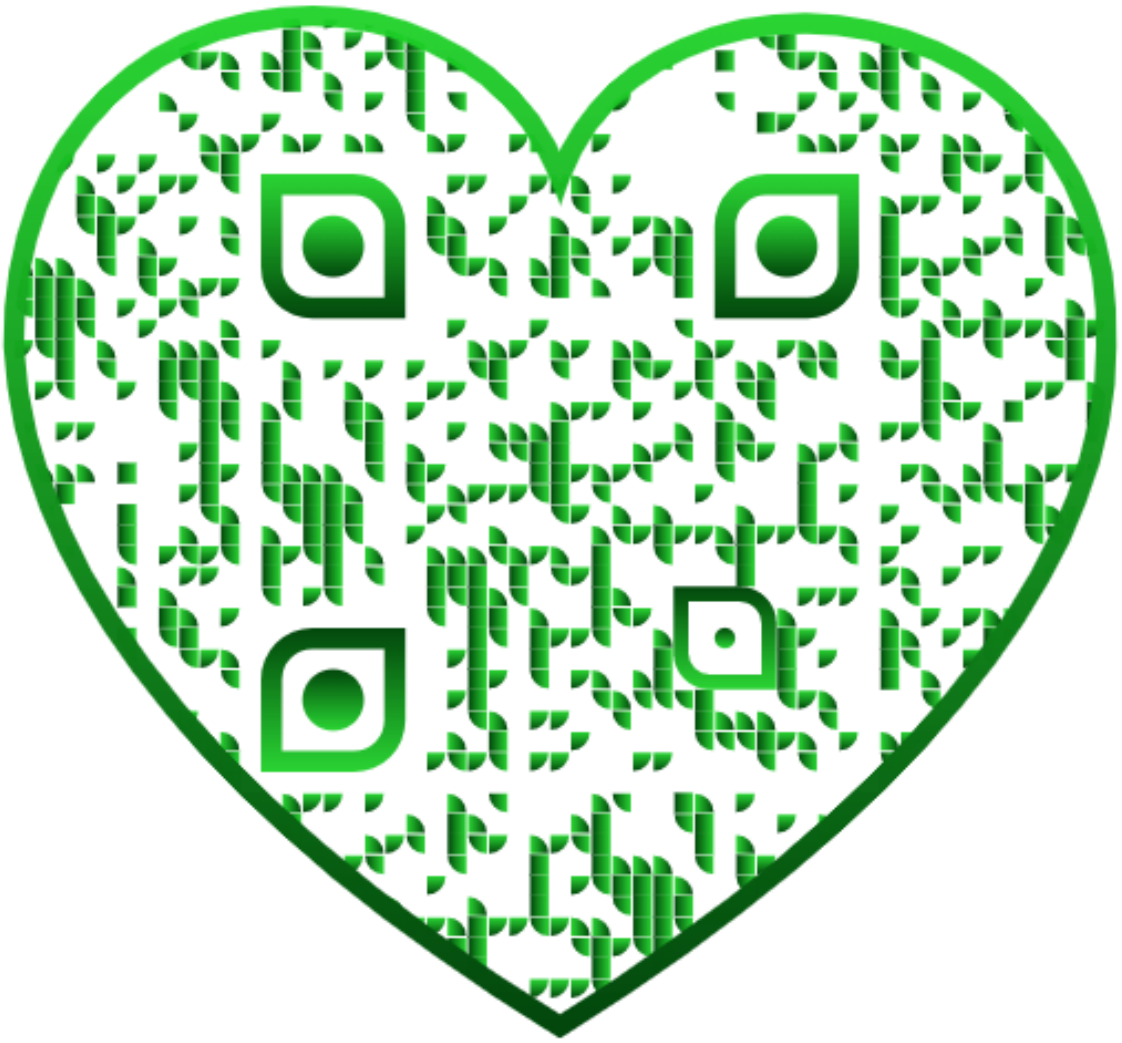

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WEDNESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY

LAFAYETTE, LONDON

Aitch

WEDNESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY

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ASH

WEDNESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY

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FRIDAY 23RD FEBRUARY

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WEDNESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY

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CMAT

FRIDAY 1ST MARCH

BUSH HALL, LONDON

VEIBEE

FRIDAY 1ST MARCH

OMEARA, LONDON

THE LAST DINNER PARTY

MONDAY 4TH MARCH

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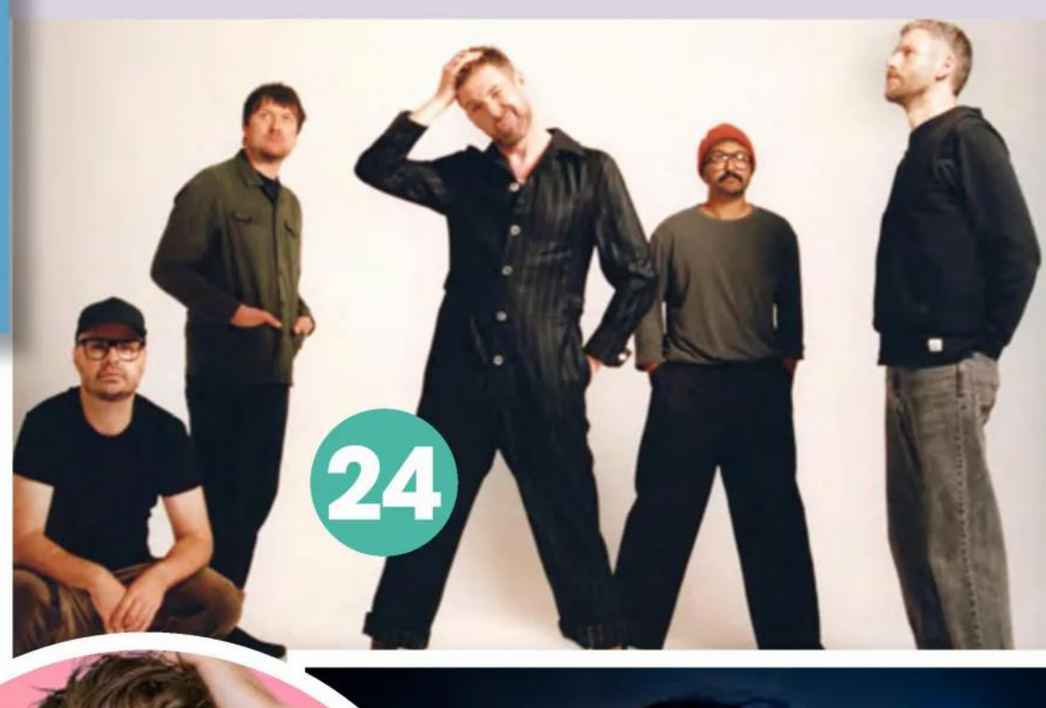

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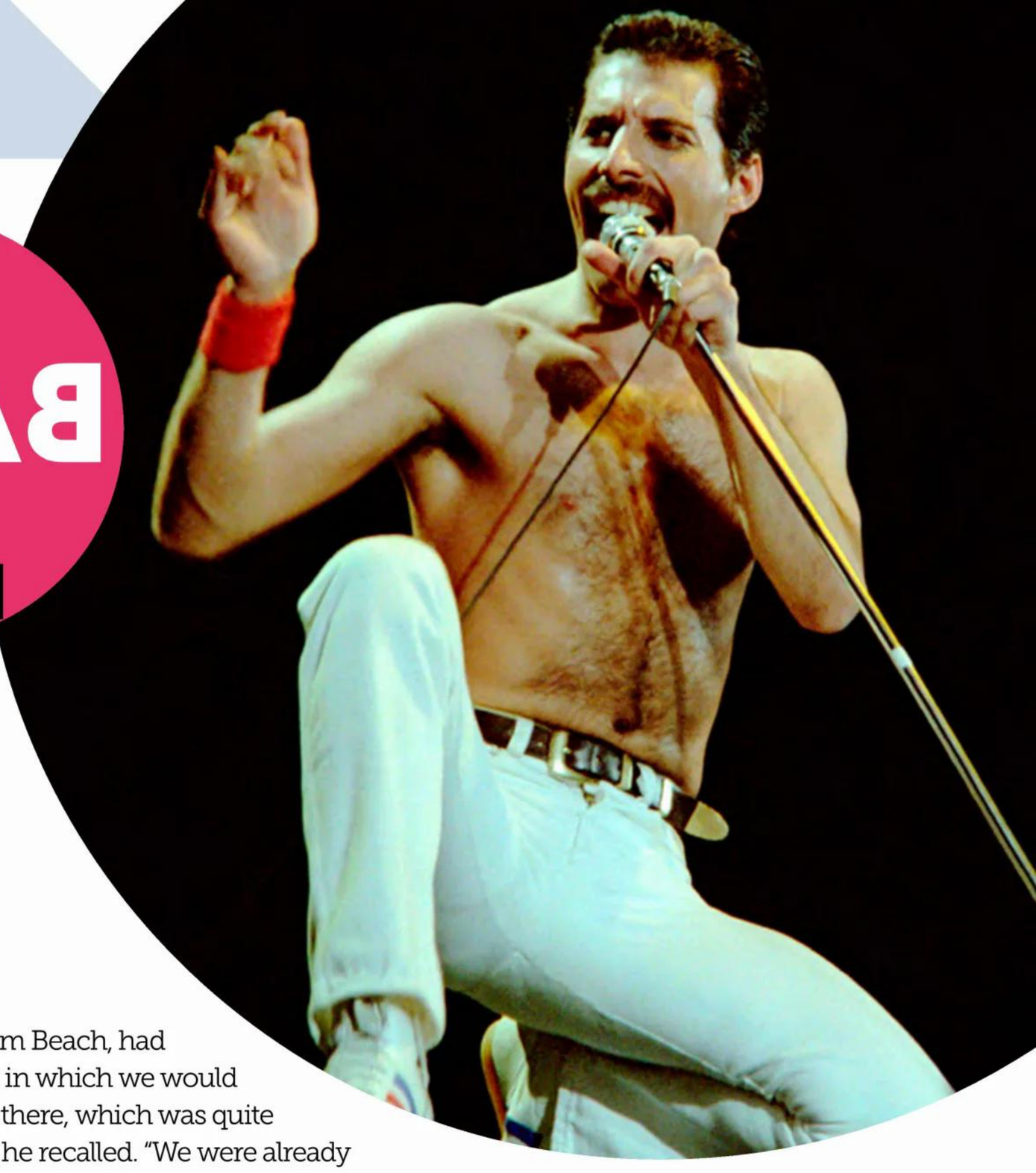
FLASHBACK

BRIAN MAY ON QUEEN ROCK MONTREAL



At a special London screening of Queen's 1981 concert movie, **Brian May** remembers the band's infamous Montreal gigs!

"This is not 'Oppenheimer' - you won't be required to sit for three hours," joked Brian May at a London press screening for 'Queen Rock Montreal' at the BFI IMAX.

Originally recorded across two shows in Canada on November 24 and 25, 1981, the show has been remastered in immersive IMAX sound and picture, and played in locations across the UK and beyond for one weekend only in January.

More than 40 years since it was recorded, the quality is striking; launching with a preview showing at the largest cinema screen in the country - measuring 25.9m (85 feet) wide by 19.8m (65 feet) high - the band's guitarist says it's a testament to the vision of director, Saul Swimmer.

"IMAX had been invented and it was out there, but it was kind of a minority thing," May noted. "It was more for scientific films in museums - kind of a lower priority thing, I suppose. The man who made this movie knew all about IMAX and I think it's safe to say that he wanted to set himself up with his system as a kind of competitor to IMAX. So it's a little bit ironic that it ended up here!"

At the time, Queen had just recorded and released their eighth album, 'The Game' (1980), which they toured extensively in the year that followed, with dates across North America and Canada, South America (their first in the region), Europe and Asia. They played 80 shows between June 30, 1980 and October 18, 1991, and by the time of the final two stops in Montreal they were ready to wind down.

"Unfortunately our manager, the illustrious Jim Beach, had made a deal in which we would go back out there, which was quite hard for us," he recalled. "We were already kind of slightly grumpy about that; not just because, physically, we needed a rest, but also because you have to re-gear up for that.

"For these two shows, we had to bring everything back together. We had 17 large semi trucks on the road, we had a crew of 51 people, and it was very hard to get it back together. We had to re-rehearse," May added, admitting the addition of cameras on the stage proved to be another obstacle for the band that didn't go down well.

"Saul Swimmer wanted to film Queen live and make a special kind of film with the latest technology, which was double anamorphic 35 millimetre, and he wanted to project it on huge screens, which were going to be put up outdoors so people could have the Queen experience."

Viewers may have been able to enjoy the Queen experience, but for Brian, Roger Taylor, John Deacon and Freddie Mercury, it was a different story. "Swimmer's crew really hadn't ever done this before. They'd never filmed a live show so they had no idea how much in the way that could possibly be and how disruptive they could be," he sighed. "They started putting cameras all over the stage so we immediately went, 'This is never going to work!'

"Then a message came from Saul Swimmer himself saying, 'Make sure the boys wear exactly the same clothes for the two nights so that we can cut between' - and Freddie went completely berserk! He said, 'I'm not being constrained in my wardrobe. I will wear what the fuck I like.' Jim Beach came in and tried to make peace and said, 'Look Freddie, you know, you could just do it...' So Jim Beach got banned from backstage!"

Their frustrations, May added, can be seen in the end result, with amped-up tempos and a driving energy from all four members. "We're really at the top of our game," he noted. "We know how to play with each other and I feel quite proud of how we were at that time. It was kind of a pinnacle."

Now, 33 years after his death, the film is also a showcase of Freddie Mercury at his finest - and a reminder to the band's surviving members of their enigmatic frontman's greatness. "You'll notice that a lot of the time you don't see us in this film, you see Freddie, and at the time that was also a source of consternation for us," Brian said. "Now we don't have Freddie, it's wonderful to watch the world through Freddie's eyes - you are so close to him. I can't think of any other record of our shows, in which you are so intimately in contact with Freddie.

"You can see everything that's going on in his head; you can see his anger, you can see his insecurity, you can see his consciousness that he can move people right to the back of the auditorium. To me, it's very emotional to watch."

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

RETROPOP

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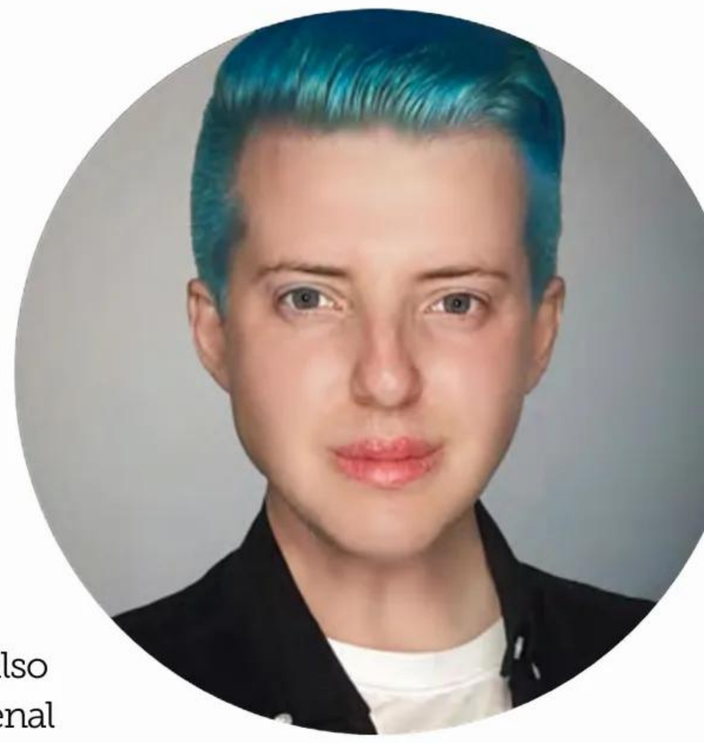
HEY THERE!



The numbers speak for themselves: over 30 million records sold... 32 UK Top 40 hits... four US Top 10 hits (including the No. 1 *Venus*)... Bananarama are a true force of nature!

Returning to the cover of **RETROPOP** to celebrate the release of their 40th anniversary LP, 'Glorious: The Ultimate Collection', Sara Dallin and Keren Woodward talk us through the career-spanning retrospective - which revisits their '80s classics while also placing the spotlight on their phenomenal years as a duo - and, four decades in, prove life in the world's best girl group is as fun as it ever was.

I've been the biggest Bananarama fan for as long as I can remember and they're one of a select group of artists - including Cher and Kylie - who give me the biggest rush whenever they put out something new. It's no exaggeration that *Feel The Love* and *Supernova* are already some of my most-played tracks of the year so far and I can't wait to see what the girls have up their sleeves for the next 12 months.

Speaking of which, there's already *so* much to look forward to in 2024, it's a little overwhelming. Later in this edition, we take a look at the live music events coming up over the summer that you won't want to miss out on, and of course we've got all the latest when it comes to new albums, tours, and all the rest - it's gonna be a big one!

This month, we chat with '90s dance icon Rozalla, who returns with her epic new album, 'Turn On The Light', along with Hue & Cry who are celebrating 40 years of hits, and Bright Light Bright Light, whose latest record, 'Enjoy Youth', is out in the spring and is simply joyous.

We also revisit Lily Allen's classic second album, 'It's Not Me, It's You', as it turns 15, go through Kaiser Chiefs' 'Easy Eighth Album' with Ricky Wilson himself, and celebrate Sophie Ellis-Bextor's chart renaissance with a selection of hits from across the years that have been given a boost after appearing on screen.

I won't keep you any longer - jump in, and I'll see you again in four weeks' time!

Connor

Connor Gotto, Editor
@MrConnorGotto

Get your first three issues for 99p each!

RETROPOP PLAYLIST

The latest releases from your favourite **RETROPOP** artists - all in one place!

JENNIFER LOPEZ - *Can't Get Enough* (BMG)
Returning to r&b for the lead single from her sequel album, 'this is me... now', j.Lo rediscovers her groove with all signs pointing to her strongest record in years!

BANANARAMA - *Supernova* (London)
A storming electro-pop anthem, the second track lifted from 'glorious: the ultimate collection' sees bananarama at their boldest and most confident - embracing the past while looking ahead.

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE - *Selfish* (RCA)
The lead single from his forthcoming sixth studio album, 'Everything I Thought It Was', fuses R&B and pop for a mid-tempo jam that introduces the star's first new solo era in six years.

SHAZNAY LEWIS - *Miracle* (1.9.7.5)
Silky smooth vocals over an all saints-esque r&b track lays the foundations for a comeback 20 years in the making, placing shaznay firmly as one to watch over the coming months.

GABRIELLE - *A Place In Your Heart* (Tag8)
The title track from her first original album in six years, gabrielle's distinctive vocals shine through on this uplifting, feelgood introduction to the latest era in her 30-year career.

THE FEELING - *The Right Wrong* (Kartel)
Reintroducing the band at their most liberated, the new single from The Feeling is a breezy, sun-soaked affair and the first taster from their forthcoming seventh album, 'San Vito'.

GOSSIP - *Real Power* (Columbia)
A fierce cut lifted from the group's album of the same name - their first in over a decade - beth ditto and co. Are back at their best on this brash indie-pop gem.

BRIGHT LIGHT BRIGHT LIGHT - *You Want My…* (YSKWN!)
A sexy, pulsing introduction to his fifth studio album, bright light once again proves himself a pop tour de force, with the help of sizzling electronics from ian masterson. Check out the fierce middle eight!

THE VERONICAS - *Detox* (Big Noise)
With 'Gothic Summer' shaping up to be their best album since 'hook me up' (2007), the veronicas' latest offering packs a hefty punch carried by the origliasso sisters' infectious energy.

HOLIDAY SIDEWINDER X KIM WILDE - *Cliffhanger* (Venus Beach)
One of pop's best kept secrets, holiday sidewinder has spent the past few years on the road with sophie ellis-bextor and now teams up with kim wilde on her latest gem of a track.

HOW TO LISTEN

Scan the QR code and check out all the **RETROPOP** *playlists in one place, over on Spotify!*

Top Of The Pops tales

Step back in time as we revisit classic moments from the 'Top Of The Pops' archives!

#22

MADONNA'S BUMMER HOLIDAY

January 26, 1984: Madonna – *Holiday*

History does not record the Queen Of Pop's view of her 'Top Of The Pops' debut.

However, in his book 'Life With My Sister Madonna', Christopher Ciccone – one of her backing dancers at the time – characterised it as deeply underwhelming. "If I'd told Madonna then that 20 years later she'd be married to an Englishman, and giving a passable imitation of Lady Marchmain from 'Brideshead Revisited', she'd probably have pissed herself laughing," Ciccone wrote. "She hated England that much."

The siblings flew in to a "cold and wet and gloomy" London the day before. "We didn't sleep on the plane, so we all feel like shit," Ciccone recalled. The recording itself was a flat affair.

Expecting a vibrant club setting, he was surprised to find that instead, "The audience stands around, almost listless."

"We feel weird performing in front of an audience who are so uncool that afterward they hardly applaud at all," Ciccone continues. "We are relieved when the show is over. We go out for an Indian meal – the only edible food in London at the time – and talk about how bizarre the show was, how strange it is not having a screaming audience cheering us on."

Things didn't improve the next day, when Madonna and co. took the train to Manchester for an edition of Channel Four's 'The Tube', live from legendary club The Haçienda – and were met with a frosty audience reception. "They just stand still and watch, faces impassive," Ciccone wrote. "Then, suddenly, they start booing and throwing things at us. I'm hit with a crumpled-up napkin, Madonna with a roll."

In his book 'The Haçienda: How Not To Run A Club', New Order's Peter Hook recalls co- owner Rob Gretton offering the singer £50 to perform again later. Her response: "Fuck off."

He also recounts a possibly apocryphal tale about Madge and her manager accidentally locking themselves in Haçienda DJ Mike Pickering's porch, ending up stuck there overnight...

None of this catalogue of misfortune put Madonna off making a return trip to 'TOTP' in December, lip-syncing to *Like A Virgin*, resplendent in a pink wig. However, almost 11 years passed before she graced the studio again. We can't help wondering if an encounter with Steve Wright during rehearsals was the final straw. "Madonna kept doing take after take and I wanted to get home," the DJ later recalled. "I went over and said, 'Look love, my mum's doing me a shepherd's pie, could you please hurry up?' She looked at me as if I was insane." **RP**

● ***Follow @TOTPFacts on Twitter for live trivia commentary on the BBC Four repeats.***

TOP 10
THE OFFICIAL CHART FOR JANUARY 22, 1984

1 FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
Relax

2 PAUL MCCARTNEY
Pipes Of Peace

3 JOE FAGIN
That's Livin' Alright

4 HOWARD JONES
What Is Love?

5 SHAKY AND BONNIE
A Rockin' Good Way

6 JOHN LENNON
Nobody Told Me

7 SNOWY WHITE
Bird Of Paradise

8 BIG COUNTRY
Wonderland

9 CHINA CRISIS
Wishful Thinking

10 CYNDI LAUPER
Girls Just Want To Have Fun

WORDS IAN BERRIMAN **PHOTOS** BBC / TOP OF THE POPS

LINE-UP NEWS

Taylor Swift smashes box office records

Taylor Swift is continuing to smash records as her 'Eras Tour' film – documenting her latest world tour – becomes the highest-grossing concert movie of all time!

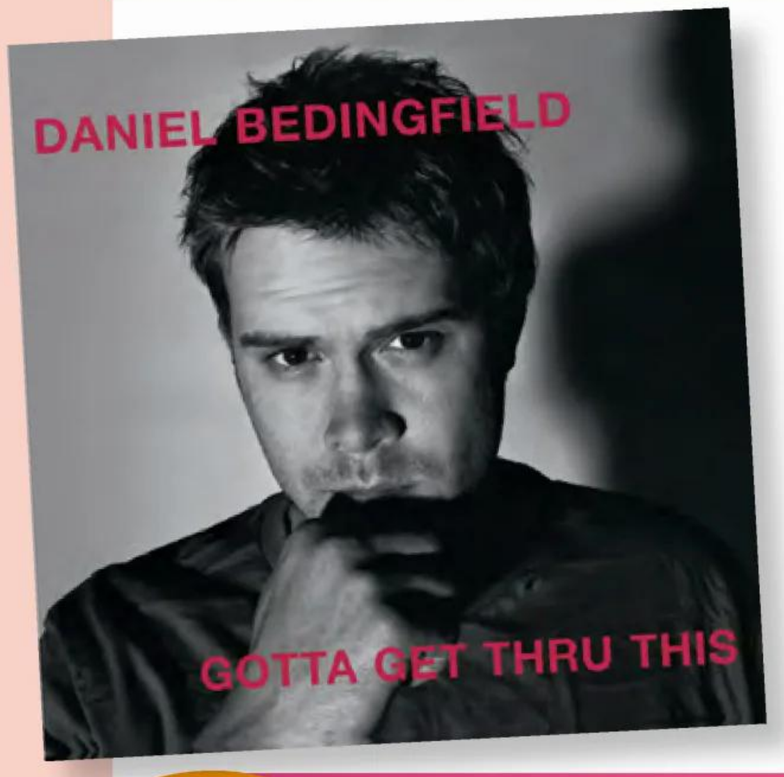
By the end of 2023, the *Cruel Summer* singer's latest project ranked 10th across all genres of the year and has now surpassed Michael Jackson's 'This Is It' to become the highest-grossing tour film ever, with an overall box office of £206m.

The tour itself was the first to ever gross over one billion dollars and in its first weekend in cinemas scored the title of the biggest opening for a concert film in history.

Capturing a performance at the Los Angeles' SoFi stadium last year, the film follows the star as she performs a career-spanning setlist, from 2008's 'Fearless' right the way up to 2022's 'Midnights'.

The tour comes to the UK this year in June, where Taylor is currently scheduled to play 15 dates across Edinburgh, Liverpool, Cardiff and London. Pop-punk band Paramore are set to perform as her opening act.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



DANIEL BEDINGFIELD'S BIG 20TH

Daniel Bedingfield will play a run of UK shows to mark the 20th anniversary of his debut album, 'Gotta Get Thru This'.

Released in 2002, the first LP from the singer-songwriter peaked at No. 2 on the UK charts, with its chart-topping title song landing Daniel a Grammy nomination.

He also hit the top spot with *If You're Not The One* and *Never Gonna Leave Your Side*.

In celebration of the record, the star will hit the road in the spring for three dates across the country - stopping in Manchester, Birmingham and London - marking his first tour in almost two decades.

He is set to be joined by a yet-to-be-announced "special guest".

Tickets are on sale now.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

IN THE LOOP

BEVERLEY KNIGHT has landed her first movie role

DOLLY PARTON celebrated her 78th birthday by releasing a 39-song version of 'Rockstar'

THE FEELING will release their seventh album, 'San Vito', on April 12

ELECTRIBE 101's 'Electribal Memories' is set for an expanded reissue on March 15

Justin Timberlake gets selfish

Justin Timberlake will release his new album, 'Everything I Thought It Was', on March 15.

Preceded by the lead single, *Selfish* - his first solo tune in five years - it kickstarts a new era for the *NSYNC legend, who will embark on a world tour throughout the summer.

For now, the 'Forget Tomorrow World Tour' encompasses just the United States and Canada, with Timberlake kicking off proceedings in Vancouver on April 29.

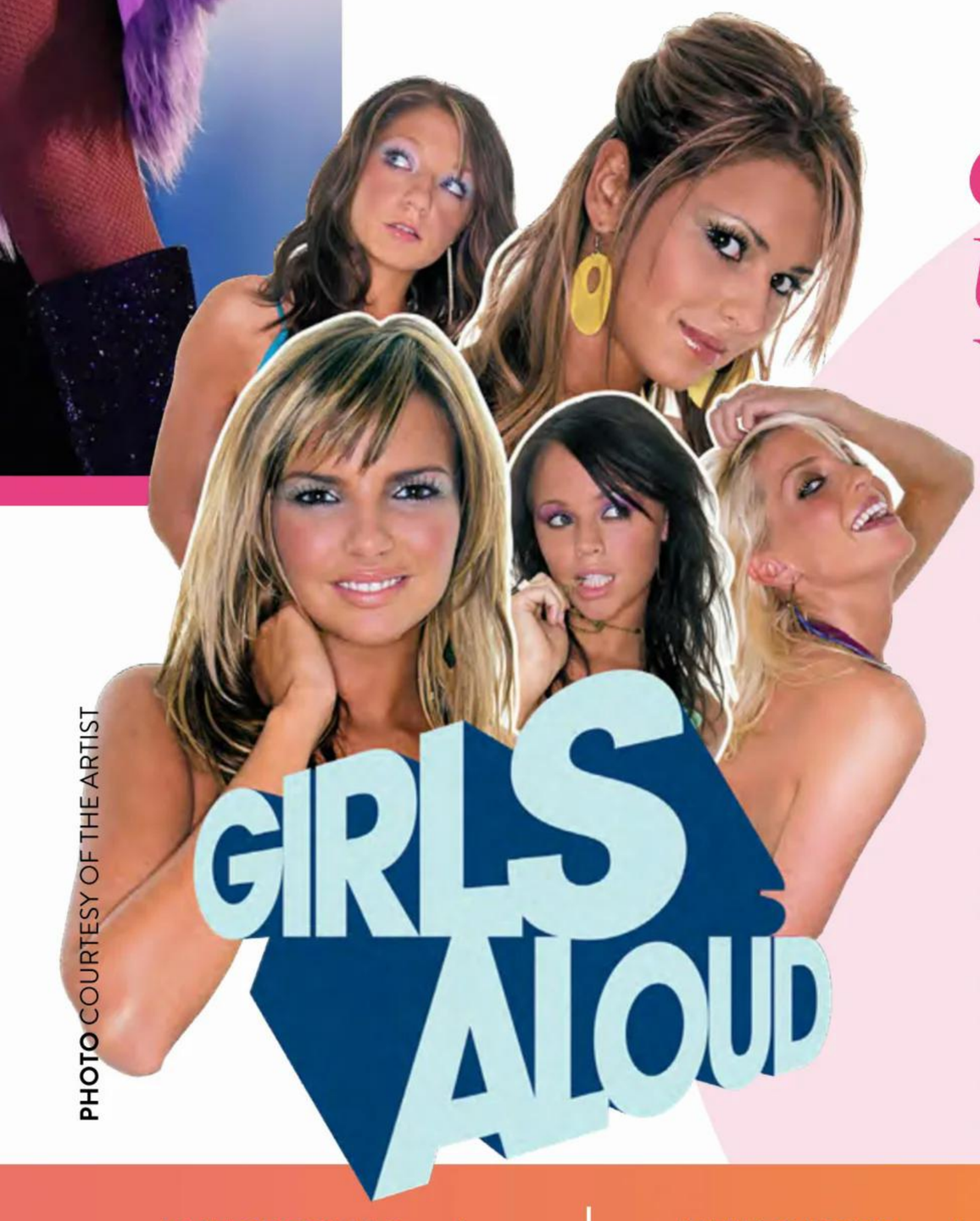
He's set to stay on the road until at least July 9, with the chart-topper expected to announce dates overseas in due course.

Speaking about his latest LP, Timberlake tells Zane Lowe on Apple Music 1: "I worked for a long time on this album and I ended up with 100 songs. So narrowing them down to 18 was a thing, and then, yeah, I'm really excited about this album.

"I think every artist probably says this, but it is my best work."

'Everything I Thought It Was' is available to pre-order now.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



GIRLS ALOUD UNLOCK THE VAULTS

Girls Aloud will be releasing a special deluxe edition of their second album, 'What Will The Neighbours Say?', on March 8, featuring their 'lost' single, *Wicked Game*.

Boasting the hits *Jump*, *The Show*, *Love Machine*, *Wake Me Up* and *I'll Stand By You*, the LP will be issued as a 3CD set, including the original UK version of the album, alongside rarities, unreleased demos, exclusive remixes, and three never-before-heard Girls Aloud songs from 2004.

Also included are the vault songs *Disco Bunny* and *Baby When You Go*.

The album also features classic B-sides such as *Androgynous Girls* and *History*, rare TV performance edits of the hits, and covers including Blondie's *Hanging On The Telephone* and Chaka Khan's *I'm Every Woman*.

The album will also be released on vinyl for the first time, as a sky-blue LP and as a limited edition picture disc.

For full details, visit our website.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

THE SPECIALS and **FUN BOY THREE** star **NEVILLE STAPLE** has been diagnosed with a 'serious' heart defect and cancelled all shows

NEW ORDER and **PETER SAVILLE** have released their second annual Blue Monday charity T-shirt

Boney M founder **FRANK FARIAN** has died aged 82

MICHAEL JACKSON's biopic - starring his nephew, Jaafar Jackson - has set an April 2025 premiere date

LINE-UP NEWS

DEE C LEE RETURNS

Dee C Lee will release 'Just Something' – her first album since 1998 – on March 22.

The LP features 11 songs: nine originals co-written by Dee, a song penned by her daughter, songwriter Leah Weller, and two inspired covers.

Produced by Sir Tristan Longworth, the album is billed as "a soulful collection with an easy-going vibe that frames the instantly recognisable vocals of one of the finest and most in-demand British soul singers of her generation".

Included are the singles *Walk Away* and *Don't Forget About Love*, with performances from fellow Style Councillor Mick Talbot, Brand New Heavies' Simon Bartholomew, and former James Taylor Quartet bassist Gary Crockett and guitarist Nigel Price.

'Just Something' is out March 22 on Acid Jazz and available to pre-order now. In support of the release, Dee will give an exclusive live performance the same day at Rough Trade East, London.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

NO DOUBT PLAN COACHELLA REUNION

No Doubt are reuniting at Coachella, marking the band's first performance in almost a decade.

The *Don't Speak* group last performed with frontwoman Gwen Stefani back in 2015, following the release of their most recent studio album, 'Push And Shove', three years prior.

Shortly after sharing a teaser on social media, showing all four members – including Adrian Young, Tony Kanal and Tom Dumont – on a video call together, it was confirmed that the group will perform in the Southern Californian desert this April.

Coachella returns to the Empire Polo Club in Indio from April 12 to 14 and April 19 to 21.

The group appears on a line-up alongside Lana Del Rey, Tyler, The Creator and Doja Cat, who will headline Friday, Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

Sabrina Carpenter, Peggy Gou and Tyla are among the acts on the Friday line-up, while Blur, Grimes and Raye will feature on Saturday.

Sunday will see performances from J Balvin, Renee Rap, Bebe Rexha and others.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

IN THE LOOP

CASCADA are working on new music as they enter their 20th anniversary year

SELENA GOMEZ is set to portray **LINDA RONSTADT** in a new biopic

LADY GAGA is back in the studio working on new music

SINÉAD O'CONNOR died of natural causes, a coroner has confirmed

Purple Rain forecast for Broadway

Prince's 'Purple Rain' movie is set to be transformed into a new Broadway musical.

Producer Orin Wolf announced that the 1984 film – about "an up-and-coming rock musician in the Minneapolis club scene, as he contends with a tumultuous home environment, a rival band and a budding romance" – will form the basis of a book by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, based on the original screenplay by Albert Magnoli and William Blinn.

The stage production will feature music from Prince's iconic soundtrack, which delivered hit singles such as *When Doves Cry*, *Let's Go Crazy*, *I Would Die 4 U*, *Take Me With U* and the classic title song.

Production details have yet to be confirmed, however the musical will be directed by Tony nominee Lileana Blain-Cruz when work finally begins.

'Purple Rain' earned $100 million worldwide and was added into the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress in 2019 for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

Meanwhile, the soundtrack sold over 25 million copies worldwide, winning Prince two Grammys and an Academy Award for Best Original Song Score.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

PHOTO OSCAR RYAN

ALL SAINTS' SHAZNAY REVIVES SOLO CAREER

Shaznay Lewis has released Miracle - her first solo single in 20 years - and looks to have more music on the way.

The track ushers in a new era for the All Saints star who has been working with Ant Whiting, Ben Cullum, Michael Angelo, Johan Hugo, Jez Ashurst, Moyses Dos Santos and Charlie Stacey on her latest material.

Of the single, she says: "*Miracle* was a journey, a relentless writing process between Emily Phillips and me. We pushed each other, we changed it a lot until, and when I finally listened to it I realised it was a love song to myself, about the person I've been for the past 25 years and where I am now.

"It's a message of encouragement to return to my love of writing with self-esteem, and confidence in the way that made me happy."

Shaznay released her first and to-date only solo record, 'Open', in 2004.

TAKE THAT are being eyed for a residency at Las Vegas' Voltaire nightclub

MICHAEL BOLTON has undergone emergency surgery after being diagnosed with a brain tumour

NICOLE SCHERZINGER will make her Broadway debut in 'Sunset Boulevard'

ELTON JOHN and **BRANDI CARLILE** have recorded a new album together, according to **PETE TOWNSEND**

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RICK ASTLEY

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SOLD OUT
Friday 23
NEWCASTLE
UTILITA ARENA

SOLD OUT
Saturday 24
LEEDS
FIRST DIRECT
ARENA

SOLD OUT
Monday 26
CARDIFF
UTILITA
ARENA

Tuesday 27
GLASGOW
OVO HYDRO

SOLD OUT
Thursday 29
BOURNEMOUTH
INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE

MARCH 2024

Friday 01
BIRMINGHAM
RESORTS
WORLD
ARENA

SOLD OUT
Saturday 02
MANCHESTER
AO ARENA

Thursday 07
LIVERPOOL
M&S BANK ARENA

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THE NEW ALBUM
'ARE WE THERE YET?'
OUT NOW

SJM Concerts Presents

DANIEL BEDINGFIELD

PLUS SPECIAL GUEST

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE
CLASSIC ALBUM 'GOTTA GET THRU THIS'

SUN 21 APRIL 2024
MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL

MON 22 APRIL 2024
BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL

TUE 23 APRIL 2024
LONDON PALLADIUM

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STAMP RIGHT NOW!

Celebrating 30 years since the Spice Girls formed, Royal Mail has commissioned a set of commemorative stamps.

The 10 main stamps feature images from performances between 1997 and 2012, including Emma Bunton, Victoria Beckham, Geri Halliwell-Horner, Melanie Chisholm and Melanie Brown's most recent performance together at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Another includes Geri in her iconic Union Jack dress, while a further five stamps feature individual images of the band members from the 'Spice World' photoshoot.

David Gold, Royal Mail director of external affairs and policy, said: "The Spice Girls have been a force to be reckoned with since they formed as a group in 1994.

"We are proud to celebrate the most successful female music group ever seen, not only for their music but their enduring influence over so many aspects of our lives."

The group added: "We are so excited to be celebrated by Royal Mail, alongside some of the most iconic and influential music legends.

"When we formed the Spice Girls we couldn't have dreamt that 30 years later we would be the first female group to be dedicated an entire stamp collection, that's Girl Power!"

This is the first time Royal Mail has dedicated an entire stamp issue to a female pop group and they become only the sixth music group to feature in a dedicated stamp issue – following on from The Beatles in 2007, Pink Floyd in 2016, Queen in 2020, The Rolling Stones in 2022 and Iron Maiden in 2023.

The Spice Girls stamps are available now.

PHOTOS ROYAL MAIL

EUROVISION SONG CONTEST MALMÖ 2024

ROMANIA DEPARTS EUROVISION '24

Romania will not take part in this year's Eurovision, it has been confirmed.

The country received a postponement from the EBU last year after failing to pay their participation fee before the initial deadline, however broadcaster TVR was granted an additional opportunity to reconsider.

Following a meeting last month, they made the decision to withdraw from the Contest, citing "financial constraints and the desire to represent Romania at a high level".

Romania last qualified for the Grand Final in 2022, when Andrei Ursu (aka WRS) represented the country. It came after three consecutive years of non-qualifications.

Meanwhile, last year's performer, Theodor Andrei, hit out at the broadcaster after failing to make it past the Semi-Finals, sharing his disappointment at enforced changes to the material and a lack of promotion behind his track, *D.G.T. (Off And On)*.

PHOTOS BBC/GUY LEVY

A*Teens reunite for Melodifest

A*Teens are set to reunite to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their debut album, 'The ABBA Generation' (1999), with a huge performance at the Melodifestivalen Semi-Finals!

The Swedish group will mark their first official appearance together in two decades at the Eurovision selection show, with original members Marie Serneholt, Dhani Lennevald, Sara Lumholdt and Amit Paul all on board for the comeback.

Starting out as an ABBA cover band, the four-piece quickly found success globally and even broke through in the US, where they served as an opening act on Britney Spears' 'Oops! ... I Did It Again' tour in 2000.

After releasing 'The ABBA Generation' album of updated classics such as *Mamma Mia*, *Dancing Queen* and *Take A Chance On Me*, the band put out their first album of original material, 'Teen Spirit', in 2001, scoring hits such as *Upside Down* and *Halfway Around The World* and touring with Aaron Carter in 2001.

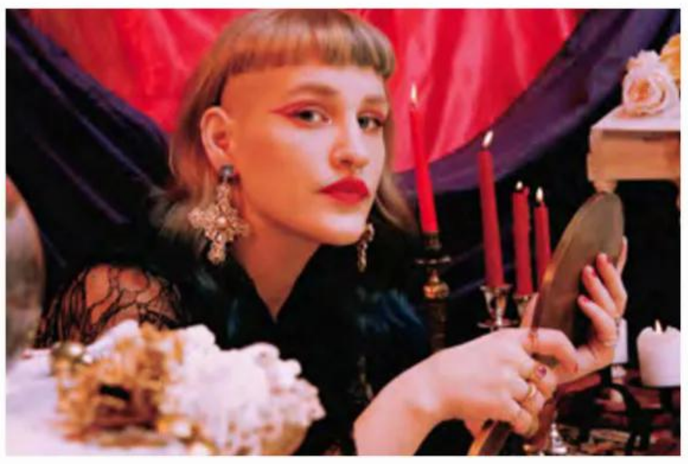
Their third album, 'Pop 'Til You Drop!', came the following year, with the band's final release - a greatest hits - arriving in 2004, prior to their split.

In the years since, Serneholt and Lumholdt have worked on TV shows including Sweden's 'The X Factor', while Lennevald is a music producer and Paul is a businessman.

LATEST ACTS CONFIRMED FOR MALMÖ 2024

ALBANIA

PERFORMER: Besa
AGE: 37
SONG: *Zemrën n'dorë*
DID YOU KNOW: Besa was a judge on her local version of 'The Voice' in 2017 and even won an award for being the best TV judge!



CZECHIA

PERFORMER: Aiko
AGE: 24
SONG: *Pedestal*
DID YOU KNOW: Aiko currently lives in Brighton, England!

GEORGIA

PERFORMER: Nutsa Buzaladze
AGE: 26
SONG: TBA
DID YOU KNOW: Nusta has competed on 'Georgia's Got Talent' and Turkey's edition of 'The Voice'!

As **Madonna** revisits 40 years of success with her global 'Celebration Tour', the hosts of the Inside The Groove podcast explore how she became an icon and the most successful solo female recording artist on the planet!

INSIDE THE GROOVE

● *For more Madonna, listen to Inside The Groove wherever you get your podcasts.*

MUSIC RELEASED: September 2000

Following up the critically and commercially acclaimed 'Ray Of Light' would never be an easy task, especially after its success at the Grammys in February 1999.

That night, Madonna agreed to record a duet with Puerto Rican heartthrob Ricky Martin and soon returned to the studio with William Orbit, where they laid down the track *Be Careful*. At the same time, they began work on the 'Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me' soundtrack song, *Beautiful Stranger*.

Later that year and with a possible 'Ray Of Light' tour delayed in favour of a return to acting, Madonna again paired with Orbit to work on music for the film 'The Next Best Thing'. As well as recording future No. 1 single *American Pie* – a cover of Don McLean's '70s classic - the pair recorded a handful of new songs, many of which would remain unreleased. Included in these was a cover of ABBA's *Like An Angel Passing Through My Room*.

By this point, Madonna was in a relationship with British film director Guy Ritchie and had pretty much relocated to London. Basing herself at Sarm West Studio in Notting Hill, Madonna worked on demos with a handful of dance DJs before her A&R manager, Guy Oseary, brought French electronic musician Mirwais Ahmadzai to her attention and they struck up an immediate rapport.

Replacing Orbit's trademark blips, echoes and heavy reverb with a dry, unsophisticated sound, the new tracks may have had their roots in the French disco vibe of recent years, but had a distinctly futuristic feel to them.

Key to the new sound was the song *Don't Tell Me*; originally written by Madonna's brother-in-law Joe Henry, Mirwais and Madonna added stuttered acoustic guitars to the track alongside hip-hop beats and cinematic strings. Together with Madonna's closely-mic'd vocals, the sound was like a futuristic country track that would help inspire the visuals for the release.

Madonna drew inspiration for the lead single *Music* after attending a Sting gig and seeing the many types of people who came together in a unifying experience. When a demo of the track leaked on the Internet, plans for the album's release were rushed forward – despite Madonna being heavily pregnant at the time.

Whilst some fans were initially disappointed not to receive 'Ray Of Light' part two, Madonna was laying down the blueprint for pop music in the '00s and others would follow.

Having reinvented herself as a tanned Earth mother for 'Ray Of Light', Madonna took the persona of an all-American cowgirl for 'Music'. Enlisting French photographer Jean Baptiste Mondino, who she had first collaborated with on the video for *Open Your Heart*, the cover shoot mirrored the European crossover which was also heard in the music. Hiding her pregnancy with strategically-placed hay bales and oversize plaid shirts while innocently adopting a Stetson, Madonna was probably unaware at the time that she was dictating the trends for all tomorrow's hen parties.

When Madonna dyed her blonde locks brown ahead of the album's photoshoot, it was clear that she wanted to signal a more mature and serious vibe for this release. Declaring herself in a revolutionary mood, she drew inspiration from Argentine guerrilla leader Che Guevara for a new look that included army fatigues and a beret. With photography by Craig McDean shot in Los Angeles, French duo M/M Paris set to work on a simplistic art pop style. The dark hair and lo-fi graphic design didn't make it as far as the second single, however, and she was back to blonde and bold colours for *Hollywood*.

AMERICAN LIFE RELEASED: March 2003

As Madonna approached 20 years in the industry, marked by the 'GHV2' hits package, she was clearly settled in her position as the Queen Of Pop.

Everyone was excited to hear what she would do next and there was initial excitement that she was continuing to work with Mirwais.

During 2002, she was approached by the James Bond movie franchise to record a theme tune for the next film. Having submitted an upbeat dance track called *Can't You See My Mind*, the 007 producers felt that the movie's title, 'Die Another Day', should be incorporated and that it should also feature the trademark strings apparent on so many past Bond themes.

The track, however, was divisive on its release. It may have reached No. 2 in the UK Singles Chart, but it was also a slight misstep for some. A cameo performance in the movie from Madonna didn't win many new fans, either, so her 2003 studio album wasn't quite as warmly anticipated as she would have liked.

This time, Madonna and Mirwais leaned into the acoustic guitar sound, using it on the majority of tracks and again setting it against hip-hop beats and robotic vocals. The new songs had a maturity missing from 'Music', but as the first album since 1989's 'Like A Prayer' to reuse the production team, it perhaps wasn't the fresh new direction that some had hoped for.

Further problems were encountered when the title track was released. Some may have scoffed at the 40-something mother of two's rap (since when has Madonna bowed down to ageism or stereotypes), but a video that had a strong anti-war message in light of the then-current Middle East crisis was considered Anti-American by some.

When threats were made against Madonna's children, she pulled the video and started to distance herself from the project a little. A shame as 'American Life' remains a firm fan favourite with some stellar songs that didn't get the full attention they deserved.

It also featured her first on-record collaboration with British musician Stuart Price; he had been musical director of the 'Drowned World Tour' in 2001 and co-wrote *Xstatic Process* from the new album.

'American Life' may have been reappraised in recent years as a classic album, but in between political controversy and under-appreciated rapping, the album was, at the time, Madonna's least successful LP. All of that would change very soon...

WORDS EDWARD RUSSELL, JONATHAN PRYCE & PETER FALLOON **PHOTO** PATRICK DEMARCHELIER

PUTTING ON THE BRITS

Ahead of the biggest night in British music on March 2, meet the acts nominated at the **2024 BRIT Awards**!

THE FULL LIST OF 2024 BRIT AWARDS NOMINEES IS:

SONG OF THE YEAR

Calvin Harris and Ellie Goulding – *Miracle*

Cassö, Raye and D-Block Europe – *Prada*

Central Cee – *Let Go*

Dave and Central Cee – *Sprinter*

Dua Lipa – *Dance The Night*

Ed Sheeran – *Eyes Closed*

J Hus featuring Drake – *Who Told You*

Kenya Grace – *Strangers*

Lewis Capaldi – *Wish You The Best*

Pinkpatheress – *Boy's A liar*

Raye featuring 070 Shake – *Escapism*

Rudimental, Charlotte and Vibe Chemistry – *Dancing Is Healing*

Stormzy featuring Debbie – *Firebabe*

Switch Disco and Ella Henderson – *React*

VenBee and Goddard – Messy In *Heaven*

BEST NEW ARTIST

Mahalia

Olivia Dean

Pinkpanthress

Raye

Yussef Dayes

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Arlo Parks

Central Cee

Dave

Dua Lipa

Fred Again..

J Hus

Jessie Ware

Little Simz

Olivia Dean

Raye

GROUP OF THE YEAR

Blur

Chase & Status

Headie One & K-Trap

Jungle

Young Fathers

INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

Blink-182

Boygenius

Foo Fighters

Gabriels

Paramore

DANCE ACT

Barry Can't Swim

Becky Hill

Calvin Harris

Fred Again..

Romy

R&B ACT

Cleo Sol

Jorja Smith

Mahalia

Raye

Sault

ALTERNATIVE/ ROCK ACT

Blur

Bring Me The Horizon

The Rolling Stones

Young Fathers

Yussef Dayes

POP ACT

Calvin Harris

Charli XCX

Dua Lipa

Olivia Dean

Raye

HIP HOP/GRIME/ RAP ACT

Casisdead

Central Cee

Dave

J Hus

Little Simz

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Asake

Burna Boy

Caroline Polachek

CMAT

Kylie Minogue

Lana Del Rey

Miley Cyrus

Olivia Rodrigo

SZA

Taylor Swift

INTERNATIONAL SONG

Billie Eilish – *What Was I Made For?*

David Kushner – *Daylight*

Doja Cat – *Paint The Town Red*

Jazzy – *Giving Me*

Libianca – *People*

Meghan Trainor – *Made You Look*

Miley Cyrus – *Flowers*

Noah Kahan – *Stick Season*

Olivier Tree & Robin Schulz – *Miss You*

Olivia Rodrigo – *Vampire*

Peggy Gou – *(It Goes Like) Na Na*

Rema – *Calm Down*

SZA – *Kill Bill*

Tate McRae – *Greedy*

TYLA – *Water*

MASTERCARD ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Blur
'The Ballad of Darren'

J Hus
'Beautiful And Brutal Yard'

Little Simz
'No Thank You'

Raye
'My 21st Century Blues'

Young Fathers
'Heavy Heavy'

"It's always really special to be up for a BRIT award – this time feels just as special as the first, especially being nominated for Artist Of The Year. More than ever, I truly know the artist that I have become and I'm enjoying making music and just having the best time! Can't wait to celebrate the event with everyone on the night."
JESSIE WARE

Winners of the Rising Star supported by BBC Radio 1 award are The Last Dinner Party!

Raye lands a monumental seven nominations, breaking the record for the most nominations for a single artist in any one year!

PHOTOS JOHN MARSHALL, ROB ANDERSON, CAL McINTYRE, CALLUM WALKER HUTCHINSON, REUBEN BASTIENNE LEWIS, ERIK MELVIN, COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

"This last year recording and touring together has been unexpected, surprising and emotional, one of our best. Thirty years on from 'Parklife', it's very special to be nominated once again for Album Of The Year and Group Of The Year. We've had some bloody great nights at the BRITs over the years and whatever happens on March 2, we're looking forward to another brilliant one." ALEX JAMES, BLUR

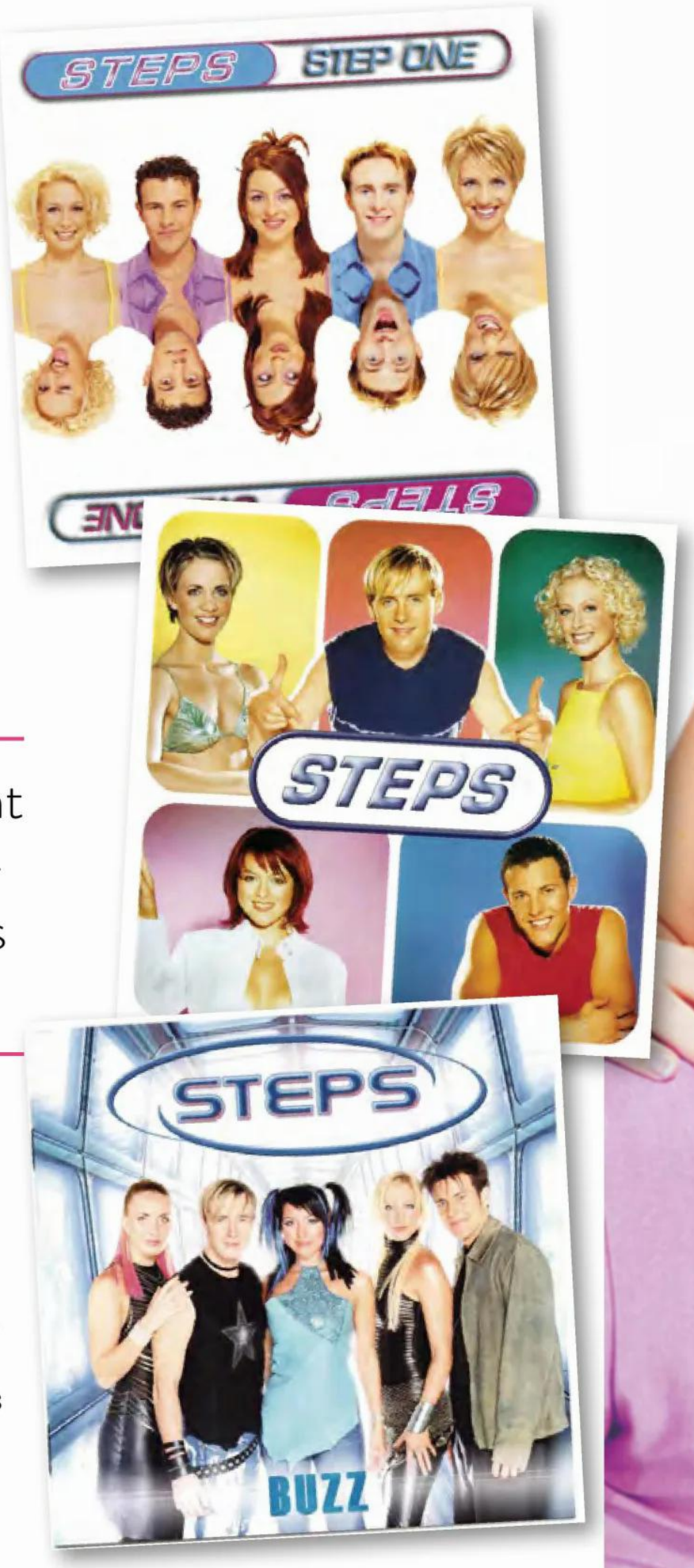
"OMG I'm a BRITs International Artist of the Year nominee! Thank you, THANK YOU!"
KYLIE MINOGUE

The Rolling Stones are nominated for their first BRIT in over a decade!

Dua Lipa is nominated for three awards and is the first artist confirmed to perform on the main show!

QUICK READ

FIRST STEPS



As Steps' early albums finally get the vinyl treatment - and with an all-new jukebox musical on the way - we revisit some of the pop juggernauts' biggest hits with songwriter and producer **Karl Twigg**!

Karl Twigg made a name for himself at PWL before going it alone - along with songwriting and production partner Mark Topham - and crafting some of the biggest hits of the late-'90s and early-'00s.

Perhaps best known for their work with Steps, the duo is behind such classics as *One For Sorrow*, *After The Love Has Gone*, *Deeper Shade Of Blue* and *Stomp*, and recently reunited on *Take Me For A Ride* - the lead track on the band's 2022 studio album, 'What The Future Holds Pt. 2'.

With the group's first three albums - 'Step One' (1998), 'Steptacular' (1999) and 'Buzz' (2000) - set to arrive on vinyl for the very first time this month, and a musical coming in the autumn, the songwriter and producer revisits his work with the Fab Five.

On his 20+ year relationship with Steps...

Steps are such a great band - they've got it all. They've got the performance, they can record... I love the guys, man. I've known them nearly all my life, they're great. My kids were Claire's [Richards] bridesmaid and page boy at her wedding... They're great guys. We've known each other for so long.

On the late night recording session for *One For Sorrow*...

With *One For Sorrow*, we had Claire in at half two in the morning doing the vocal. Claire's mum, Nina, was on the phone - and we didn't know them that well - she's on the phone, we were laughing, and she's saying, 'I hope they're not giving you drugs to stay awake!' She was like, 'No, mum, no... it's just a very late session and we're all very tired.' But that's a true story - she thought she was on speed to stay awake!

On Tina Cousins' original version of *Deeper Shade Of Blue*...

We wrote that... I think it was a Saturday morning, we were at PWL. We banged the chords together, put a rough backing track to it, and it was Lance Ellington who sang the demo. We actually had no lyrics for it, so he actually just sang out the melody, worked out all of the harmonies - it was like a three part harmony - and it sounded very sort of Latino, the original version of it.

That's when I think they asked if we'd do it with Tina Cousins, but it actually didn't suit her as an artist. I don't think we got the production quite right on it for Tina Cousins. Because what you're trying to do is trying to get a square peg in a round hole there.

Doing it for Steps, it was such a simple and such an easy flow, because it just worked for them. And it came out great. Whereas with Tina, it was a very laboured song. Trying to get it to fit with Tina's stuff at that time, and it just wasn't right

So that's why, when Steps came along, it was just sitting there and it was perfect for him.

On how *Stomp* was a turning point for the band...

Stomp was one of my favourites because, I think at that point, Steps started to progress forward. They were changing and the *Stomp* thing was just like, 'Wow, here we go. We can open up a whole new avenue for Steps.'

I think that if it just kept going a little bit longer, they would have definitely hit ABBA status where they would have actually just had to release a record once every God knows how long... But unfortunately, they had different plans and they had to fulfil their plans and had to do their own thing.

On how he celebrated Steps' No. 1 singles...

Tragedy/Heartbeat went to No. 1 in the seventh week of release. It actually went

Steps (clockwise from top left): Claire Richards, Lisa Scott-Lee, Ian 'H' Watkins, Faye Tozer, Lee Latchford-Evans

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

to the No. 1 over Christmas, so we didn't even know! We had a phone call saying, 'Oh, well done, you're at No. 1!' We said, 'Alright, we'll go and have a drink then.' I think that's what I did - I had a beer indoors and carried on watching the telly. That's about as exciting as it got.

When *Stomp* hit No. 1, I went to my caravan for the weekend. So yeah, it's not very rock and roll... Caravan with the kids, bit of arcade and beach, you know!

On his years at PWL

We did so many years at PWL and it was great - great songs and stuff - but it really was not the nicest place in the world to work. It was almost like under some sort of fascist regime. You weren't allowed live drums - for one of the tracks, we actually had to have the drum brought in a piece at a time so that Pete [Waterman] didn't see a live drum kit. It was like, 'What do you want that live bollocks for?' Pete's thing was, 'Put boom boom boom on it, there you go - that'll be a hit.'

You know, it's really easy to sit there and say that when he had absolutely no creative input into any of it whatsoever. So, he just left us to get on with it and he didn't even hear *One For Sorrow* until it was on the mixing board and it was ready to be bounced! Yet in his book he says, 'I gave Mark and Karl the idea for *One For Sorrow*' - what, you mean 'Go and write a song'?

On reuniting with Mark after 10 years and working with Steps again on *Take Me For A Ride*...

We didn't actually stop working together. We just kind of did our own thing. I suppose we just fell out of love with music a little bit. Which is difficult, especially when you have a good run. But then you get pigeonholed and people only expect that style of music from you... It does become a little bit stifling.

So what we've done this time, we said, 'You know what, fuck it - let's really give them something.' It was the first song that we'd written for like 10 years, and it was done in two days, programmed up and... it really is something else!

The band's got to move on, but we've moved on quite a lot as well. So anything we do for Steps in the future is not going to sound nostalgic at all. It's going to sound groundbreaking. **RP**

● ***'Step One', 'Steptacular' and 'Buzz' are out on vinyl February 23 on Demon. The musical, 'Here & Now', will open at The Alexandra, Birmingham for a limited engagement from 9 – 24 November 2024.***

TRACK BY TRACK

KAISER CHIEFS' EASY EIGHTH ALBUM

Back with a funky new groove, Kaiser Chiefs frontman **Ricky Wilson** guides us through the band's 'Easy Eighth Album'!

1 FEELING ALRIGHT

On the first day with Nile Rogers, he said, 'What have you got?' We searched through some jams we had and this was a song that stood out to him. The band loved playing it round and round, and it must be fun to play but we never really knew where it would find a home. Nile turned out to be the best estate agent and found it a home almost immediately. He also brought in Amir [Amor, producer], who turned out to be our housemate for the entire record. A good place to start.

2 BEAUTIFUL GIRL

We don't write that many songs about girls. We did it once and it turned out pretty well, so we should probably do it more. I had the line *'spoiled my chance for me to dance alone'* and kind of built it lyrically around that. Nobody really needs a record player to consume music, but sometimes what we need and what we want are a grey area that you can't separate out. Much like relationships.

3 HOW 2 DANCE

This is a bit of fun and lets us flex our pop muscles a bit. Pop muscles are the hardest to keep in shape but sometimes release the most dopamine.

4 JOB CENTRE SHUFFLE

This is what the Kaiser Chiefs were best at 20 years ago and I hope it scratches the itch that a lot of our original fans want scratching. Scratching makes it worse though so be careful what you itch for.

5 BURNING IN FLAMES

Being in a band for over 20 years isn't as easy as we make it look. Sometimes any one of us could feel like we don't wanna do it anymore. As long as it's no more than two of us at the same time then I reckon we're OK. There aren't many of us bands left from the early 2000s and that's probably at times because it doesn't seem worth it. But if your favourite toy is broken you don't throw it away, you fix it.

At times I've been guilty of gauging success on other peoples, or critics opinions or even record sales, which anyone can manipulate in their favour nowadays. The real success is being able to make an 'Easy Eighth Album'.

The Kaiser Chiefs (l-r): Nick Baines, Andrew White, Ricky Wilson, Vijay Mistry, Simon Rix

6 REASONS TO STAY ALIVE

This is the *Job Centre Shuffle*'s more evil twin (they're both evil). We had to keep them apart because they would fight.

7 SENTIMENTAL LOVE SONGS

A song for my wife. I was really lucky that Whitey came with this pretty much fully formed and it sounded to me like the least corny love song ever written. I tried not to match that but may have failed, 'cos it still makes me happy I'm not alone (see *Beautiful Girl*) when I hear it. It could have been on 'Employment' (2005) if we had more keyboards.

8 JEALOUSY

One guy on Twitter said it sounded like The Beautiful South... I'm glad someone got that. We had the track and I wanted Paul Heaton's take on it. So I listened to 'Carry On Up The Charts' (1994) three times then wrote the words. Good pop song. Solid.

9 NOEL GROOVE

This has been knocking around for the last two records. We had never nailed it before but I think we nail-gunned it. I hate it when I do faux Cribs chanting, it always feels forced. So The Cribs did that. They are the most authentic band I have ever had the pleasure to meet (and I've met all the bands) and when I heard them on it I knew it was good. That's what the song is about, really. Stop chasing anything but authenticity when you get in the studio.

10 THE LADS

I don't have many male friends. And I don't think I need 'em, with the wife and kids or whatever. But the ones that I do have (either in the band or those I rarely speak to) know that I love them. I hope they know I would post bail for them, or drive them across a border in the boot of my car, or look after their kids when they're gone. Male friendships are weird. None of us really like IPA but we're too afraid to say. This one is for the lads. **RP**

● ***'Kaiser Chiefs' Easy Eighth Album' is out March 1 on Kaiser Chiefs Recordings.***

PHOTO CAL McINTYRE

QUICK READ

ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN

In their five years together in the late-'90s and early-'00s, **Rialto** had their share of ups and downs, but two decades later they're back making music again!

When the likes of Blur and Oasis were staunchly flying the flag for Britpop back in 1997, indie group Rialto emerged on the scene to give them a run for their money with a slick look and anthems that had fans and critics raving.

Upon the release of their debut single, *When We're Together*, they were tipped for massive success, and while follow-ups *Monday Morning 5:19* and *Untouchable* saw them break into the Top 40 and Top 20 of the UK charts, respectively, they were unceremoniously dropped by their label EastWest weeks before their first LP was released, despite months of heavy promotion.

A new label and second album followed, before they split in 2002 - but last year the band made a surprise comeback, playing their first show in over two decades and, according to frontman Louis Eliot, it marked the dawning of a new era for the group. "We'd been approached by a few promoters over the years and thought, 'Maybe...', but I then started making some new music and writing songs that felt like they had a Rialto worldview and we just thought, 'Why not?'," he says. "So it suddenly went from not feeling like the most appropriate thing in the world to do - or even something that we'd even consider - to feeling very right to be doing now. And that's what's made it fun!"

> **IT ALL CAME ABOUT IN A REALLY UNPLANNED SORT OF WAY, BUT IT FEELS LIKE IT SHOULD BE HAPPENING EXACTLY AS IT IS**

Back in November, the band played the Britpop and Madchester-focused Shiiine On Weekender at Butlin's Minehead Arena, and more recently performed a headline show at The Lexington, London last month. "It all came about in a really unplanned sort of way, but it feels like it should be happening exactly as it is," he adds. "We did some new music at the show in November and I feel like I've been reinvigorated. The place where the songs come from is the same as the original Rialto ones, just 20 years later..."

This time around, there are a couple of line-up changes; Louis and Julian Taylor (bass) return from the original band, with guitarist Jonny Bull having made roots in Portugal and keyboard player Toby Hounsham a member of The Stranglers line-up and living in Australia, making way for the latest iteration of Rialto. In the years since they last performed, Louis joined Grace Jones' band and has played with the iconic performer for 13 years. "I'll continue with that," he insists, "but there was this nagging thing about writing songs and doing other stuff."

There's an irony that the band played their first headline show in decades during the same month that their '90s chart pals, Shed Seven, scored their first-ever No. 1 album. Like Rialto, the Sheds were never at the forefront of the Britpop generation, but their recent success is a positive sign for the industry overall.

"I think it's one of the few good things that's happened to do with streaming, because people's access to music is so much broader and it's not always about what's the latest thing," Louis muses. "I've got kids who are in their late teens - in fact my daughter's 20 - and they don't care whether the record came out last week or whether it came out in 1961!"

It's a different landscape to when Rialto started out and set about on their journey through the pop ranks. "Jonny

and I had been in another band called Kinky Machine and we'd schlepped around the toilet tour circuits and indie clubs, which was really good fun, but we felt we were in a kind of creative straitjacket," he admits. "The impetus for Rialto was really just to go, 'You know what, let's put the guitars down for a minute and make some sounds that we really like from a broader palette of pop influences'. The initial drive was to not be afraid to be quite dramatic, veering into a bit camp sometimes, with that sort of fearlessness."

Their plan worked and Rialto were beginning to make waves when things started going awry. "We were very lucky in lots of ways but we were also unlucky," Louis confesses. "It was almost like a comedy with some of the things that happened: getting signed, dropped, signed again, and then that label being bought out by the one that dropped us. But I certainly didn't allow myself to be bitter and we continued to have some real lucky breaks."

It's a refreshing mindset and a driving optimism that feeds into the group's current position. "I got quite ill about six years ago and I came out of the other side of that thinking, rather than 'I must look after myself', that 'Wow, I'm going to chase after my youth and have fun, because it could all be over tomorrow'," he smiles. "I think there was a parallel with how I felt in the '90s."

When it comes to a long-term plan, Rialto's future is open, but Louis maintains they have plenty to work with. First off, there's "a fair amount of unreleased stuff" in the archive, he says, and the band is still trying to locate who owns the rights to some of their released catalogue, including their second album and EPs too. "Admin is not my favourite pastime but we will get there," he laughs.

Then, of course, there's new material. "We've got some stuff and we were really pleased with the reaction when we played it live," Louis adds. "Sometimes you see a band and as soon as they mention new stuff, there's a collective groan and a stampede for the bar. But we've slipped a couple into the show and they've gone down incredibly well. So we just thought, 'Yeah, let's do that again', and I think we'll be releasing some stuff this year. But I can't say much more than that at the moment..." **RP**

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FLASHBACK

DANIEL JAMES ON YELL!

They broke into the UK Top 10 with *Instant Replay*, but just as Yell! were getting going singer **Daniel James** recalls their pop dreams came crashing down...

In the years before he entered the UK Top 10 as one-half of Yell! with their cover of Dan Hartman's *Instant Replay*, Daniel James had made a bid for UK Eurovision glory (on 1986's 'A Song For Europe' under the name Colin Heywood), and dipped his toes into acting, before launching the pop duo with Paul Varney.

"When we first got together, we were touring around the country in a battered old car, playing clubs at 11 o'clock at night and one o'clock in the morning," he recalls. "We did that for about 18 months and then our manager introduced us to this lady that ran lunch clubs for school kids. So at night we'd be running around playing clubs and bars, and by lunchtime we'd be back playing the school halls."

Having built a fanbase, the duo set about landing a record deal. Daniel wanted to sign with CBS: "I saw myself as a singer songwriter; the last thing I expected to be doing was going down the avenue of cover versions and jigging about on stage."

Yell! Signed with Simon Cowell's label Fanfare, which wasn't a major label at the time, but was home to Sinitta, who was back in the charts at the time with her cover of Vanity Fare's *Hitchin' A Ride*.

"It's no secret that Simon practically slept with the Guinness Book Of Hit Singles under his pillow," Daniel laughs. "I went to Ibiza, we were absolutely knackered. We'd been around the country about 18 months and then we signed with Simon and we just knew we needed a bit of a break. And he wanted to do a cover version, but couldn't find one.

"Paul and I were in Ibiza, in one of those chill out places at about two in the morning, and this DJ came on and he played Dan Hartman's *Instant Replay*.

"It started quite laid back and then suddenly the whole floor just filled up. And it was just like, 'Wow, what a great response.' I looked at Paul and said, 'This could be the one. We could do this one.'

"So we ended up coming back to England and having meeting number 7,362 with Simon to pick a cover version, and I told him the story about us in Ibiza. He leaned over and picked up the Guinness Book of Hit Singles and he'd earmarked *Instant Replay* the night before."

It peaked at No. 10 on the charts, but their second single, the Stock Aitken Waterman track *One Thing Leads To Another*, stalled at No. 81 and the final Yell! single, a new version of Average White Band's *Let's Go Round Again*, only charted three places higher.

"When you come out with a first single, you need a second single as quick as possible afterwards to consolidate the fanbase," reflects Daniel. "I think Simon had been talking to Pete [Waterman] about possibly doing a track with them and I think that caused a bit of delay.

"That was why the gap was there, and then we ended up doing *Let's Go Round Again* as a kind of stopgap, really. It wasn't really something that grabbed me. I mean, it's a lovely song, and I think our version is a good version... But I wanted [album track] *I Got The Feeling*."

On the back of the poor single performance, Yell!'s album, 'Let's Go!', was never released in the UK, joining a list of acts including Lonnie Gordon and Mandy Smith who never got to release their records in this country.

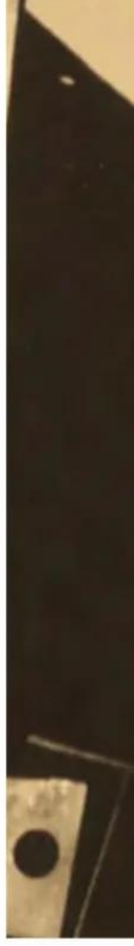
But a few years back the album finally got a wider release, both physically and on digital platforms, with Daniel admitting his joy that their work is finally out. "We have some fabulous fans and they've been very, very loyal. I still get messages, letters and cards," he adds. "And I'm not saying I was the biggest star in the world and people were following me - I don't mean that - but genuinely, people that supported the group and have remained supportive of me.

"When I mentioned I was gonna bring [solo] some stuff out, they've been so supportive, and you kind of get out what you put in. I put a lot into it and I'm appreciative that people still remember." **RP**

PHOTO STEVE ULLATHORNE

QUICK READ

ROUND THE WORLD



Over 30 years after it was initially recorded, short-lived '80s group **World Goes Round** revisited and finally released their lost debut album - which vocalist Frank Musker admits was a full-circle moment for the band!

Back in 2020, World Goes Round's lost 1989 album finally materialised, encompassing the best of the '80s in a 10-track collection that begs the question - what took them so long?

With a line-up comprising Frank Musker (co-lead vocals), Elizabeth Lamers (co-lead vocals), Jeff Hull (keyboards/drums/bass guitar) and Marty Walsh (guitar), the record - produced by Tommy Vicari - was believed to be lost, before Marty discovered an old cassette tape featuring the perfectly preserved tracks.

More than three decades on, Frank looks back on the group's recording sessions and ahead to what's still to come...

'World Goes Round' is a new album to fans, but for you guys it's 30+ years old. What's the story behind the music?

It's a funny story because people have said, 'Well, is it old music? Or is it new music?' And I said, 'Well, it's old music if it was written 30 years ago, but it's new music if you just heard it...'

It's rooted in the past and the present, because the original seven tracks that were found on the cassette are pretty much as they were - they've just been mastered from the cassette, which is phenomenal. But because the record company wanted us to do a complete album, we dug back in the archives and pulled out two or three other songs.

So, after more than 30 years, why is it the right time for people to hear 'World Goes Round'?

> **WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWING OUR NOSES ALL THE WAY ALONG, BECAUSE THIS STARTED AS AN MP3 ON AN EMAIL...**

We were massively disappointed in 1989 that we didn't get the kind of response that we wanted, so we just put it away and we all got on with our lives. I went on to work with Brian May and Zucchero [Fornaciari], various people during the '90s. Marty is now a Professor at Berklee College of Music in Boston. So we all have our lives and we all have our families... But this little record somehow deserved to be heard.

I think, particularly the coincidence of it being during lockdown, it was one of those things where even Tommy - who, before lockdown, he had three movies to do - was suddenly stuck at home, and luckily had his own studio, where we could record and mix. So, the additional recording that was done, was done during lockdown. And the great thing was that everybody was available, because nobody was working.

How was it, not only to reconnect professionally, but to do so virtually after three decades apart?

It's really extraordinary. Marty had been in touch a little bit over the years, Tommy as well. Elizabeth, I'd sort of lost touch with... And the record has kind of brought us all back together. We had this common project and, in a way, we all say it kind of got us through the first lockdown.

Because of the time difference, Tommy and Jeff would be in the studio overdubbing and then they would send me mixes. It would be eight o'clock in the morning, my time, and it would be midnight their time. So I'd be listening to it and going, 'OK, well, I think we should do this or that.' And it actually worked out incredibly well.

Nothing would please me more than to be in a studio with all these guys and being able to play the music and hug them and do all that stuff. But actually, in a weird sort of way, because everyone is in their own little space, it became a very

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

concentrated process.

Even the process of overdubbing; Elizabeth had her own setup at home, so she would record her vocals in her own studio, and then they would go across [to Tommy and Jeff]. *Put It On The Line* was pretty much the only track where we kept the original vocal from 1989, but almost everything else on the record is overdubbed and new. But it's pretty seamless, and that's very heartening, because it means that the band is still at the height of its powers, musically.

You can hear a lot of influences of that time throughout the record: Chaka Khan, Fleetwood Mac, Michael Jackson... Were you aware of what would go on to be the enduring sounds of the '80s?

That was what was around at the time. All of those records that you mentioned - which I love, by the way - they were all our kind of benchmarks. Steely Dan, Michael MacDonald, Quincy Jones doing Michael Jackson. They were all the same kind of group of musicians in LA. At that time, there was a really tight club of great musicians like Jeff Porcaro, the Toto guys, Steve Lucas, Jay Graydon, Larry Carlton... they all ended up on the same kinds of records.

Occasionally, Quincy would have Eddie Van Halen come in and play a solo on Michael Jackson or something. But the basic tracks were always cut by these wonderful rhythm sections of guys who made records, which were not only incredibly accurate, but not machine-like. They were human and they breathed and they had this wonderful kind of energy to them, because there's no substitute for four guys in the room playing live.

It's taken three decades to get 'World Goes Round' out, but what's next for you guys?

This record, between the work that we put in in 1989 and the work we put in to finish... It's too early to be thinking about another record. Of course, nothing would please me more than people saying, 'Come on, let's make another record.' This record was really a labour of love, and I think it shows. Whether we could just do that, again - I think if the album got enough traction, who knows...

We've been following our noses all the way along, because this started as an mp3 on an email that Marty sent me - and now it's an album, it's a whole thing. So anything can happen, it can go anywhere. But we're also very realistic about how hard it is to get noticed.

For me, it's always been about the music and just being able to finish the record the way we wanted to, and just to have it there. Once it's done, the record kind of has a life of its own, and you just don't know how it's gonna work. Sometimes, after 30 years, people want to listen to this music. So I'm optimistic, but if it starts to get the kind of traction that we were hoping for, then absolutely - nothing would please me more than to go into a studio live and work with these guys. **RP**

● ***'World Goes Round' is out now on Viper.***

You'd better not KILL THE GROOVE

The lifecycle of a single can be over in a matter of weeks, but sometimes all it takes for the stars to align is a strategic sync or a social media sensation to send it soaring back into the charts!

After soundtracking a nude Barry Keoghan showing off his wares whilst shimmying around Saltburn Mansion, Sophie Ellis-Bextor's *Murder On The Dancefloor* has become a social media sensation and a chart hit all over again!

Twenty-three years after its release, the 2001 classic matched its original No. 2 peak on the UK Singles Chart and even entered the US Billboard Hot 100 - marking Sophie's first-ever appearance on the countdown.

As a result, the single will be issued on CD and vinyl on February 16 and Sophie's back working with early collaborators, Richard X and Cathy Dennis, on new music - with her husband, The Feeling's Richard Jones, teasing a return to her early sound.

When a fan on X suggested it's "time for Sophie to come back with disco dance and get all these people who now love Murder dancing", he replied: "Don't you worry. Sophie's been talking about this way before what's happening with Murder.. weeks before Saltburn we've already had CD and RX in our house.

"Bangers are incoming!"

It's proven a game-changer for Sophie, but she's not the only artist to receive a boost after their music appeared on screen...

PRINCESS SUPERSTAR
Perfect (Exceeder) AS FEATURED IN 'SALTBURN'

Sophie isn't the only act to feel the so-called 'Saltburn' effect; Princess Superstar's club classic *Perfect (Exceeder)* - a mash-up of *Exceeder* by Mason and her 2005 track, *Perfect* - appeared in the soundtrack to the movie's 'Midsummer Night's Dream'-themed party scene and has gone on to enjoy a surprise revival since, returning to the charts for the first time in 17 years and even breaking the UK Top 40. Additionally, the track has enjoyed viral success online, breaking the Top 5 of the US Viral Spotify 50 chart.

KATE BUSH

Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)

AS FEATURED IN 'STRANGER THINGS'

An all-time classic, Kate Bush's *Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God)* reached No. 3 in the UK back in 1985, and only No. 30 Stateside. However, it finally bagged the No. 1 spot over here in 2022 when it was featured in a tense scene in the Netflix smash 'Stranger Things', while also scaling to No. 3 in the US. A fan of the series herself, Bush herself made a special exception for the song to be used for the show and it paid off as she became the oldest female artist to have a No. 1 on the UK charts.

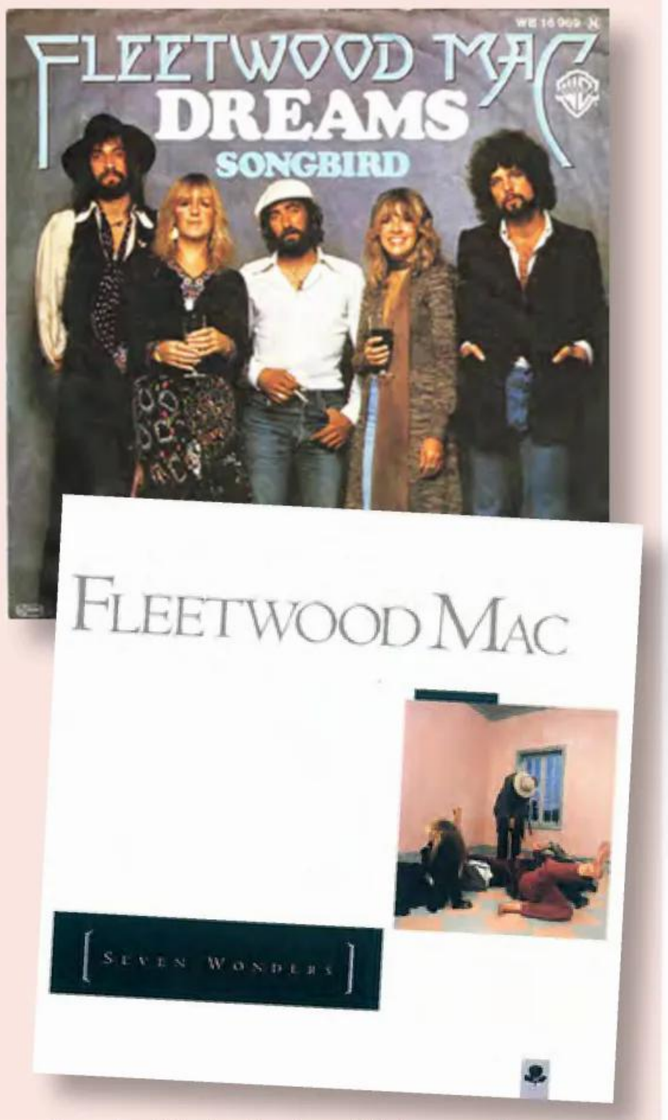
FLORENCE & THE MACHINE

Dog Days Are Over

AS FEATURED IN 'GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 3'

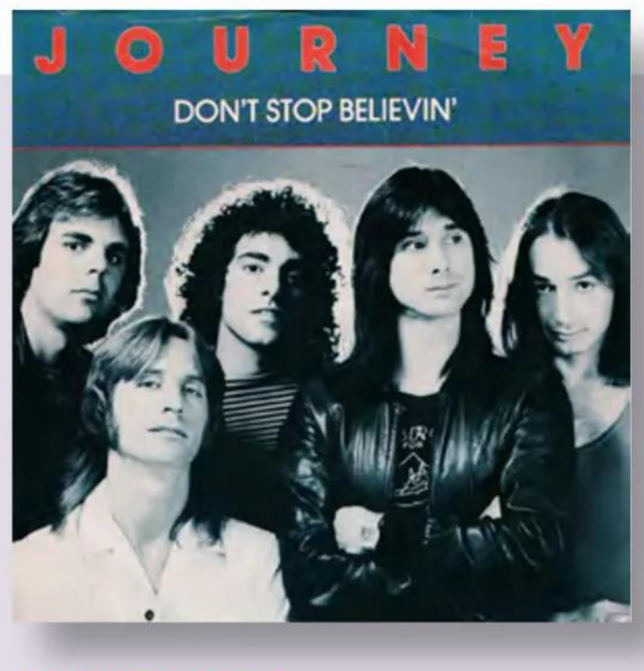
When it comes to songs with random chart runs, Florence & The Machine's *Dog Days Are Over* is up there! Upon its initial release in 2008, it peaked at No. 89 in the UK, before climbing - four months later and thanks to a run of triumphant performances - to No. 23. In May 2023, the song would rise again thanks to being featured in Marvel film 'Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 3' to reach its highest chart peak of No. 21.

FLEETWOOD MAC
Dreams / Seven Wonders
AS FEATURED IN NATHAN APODACA'S VIRAL CRANBERRY JUICE TIKTOK VIDEO / 'AMERICAN HORROR STORY: COVEN'



In 2020, a trucker named Nathan Apodaca broke down at the side of the road in Idaho and, for whatever reason, decided to film himself drinking cranberry juice and skateboarding to work, all whilst lip-syncing to the classic Fleetwood Mac track, *Dreams*. The song skyrocketed in popularity - returning to the US Top 20 and UK Top 40 - and Apodaca even got a brand new pick-up truck courtesy of the brand of cranberry juice he was drinking, Ocean Spray.

Six years earlier, Fleetwood Mac's own Stevie Nicks helped 'Tango In The Night' (1987) cut *Seven Wonders* regain popularity after performing the track in the final instalment of 'American Horror Story: Coven'. After appearing in multiple episodes of the show - on which she also sang the band's *Rhiannon* and solo single *Has Anyone Ever Written Anything For You?*, the song saw a whopping 9086 per cent increase in downloads after the series finale aired.



JOURNEY
Don't Stop Believin'
AS FEATURED IN 'GLEE'

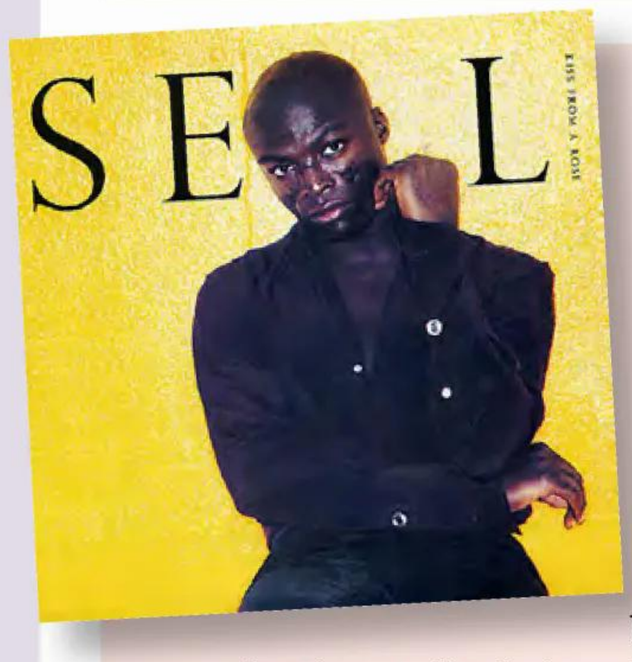
Thanks to a memorable performance in the first episode of hit US TV show 'Glee', American rock band Journey's hit *Don't Stop Believin'* rose to a Top 10 peak in the UK, with a No. 6 placement far exceeding its original No. 62 chart position in 1981. It wasn't all good news for Journey, however, as the high-schoolers' version managed to top them, reaching No. 2 in the UK and also going Top 5 in the States - the first in an epic run of chart hits for the cast of the Fox series.

THE CARDIGANS
Lovefool
AS FEATURED IN 'ROMEO + JULIET'

The Cardigans' sunny and uplifting hit *Lovefool* initially charted at No. 21 back in the summer of 1996, but Baz Luhrmann's adaptation of 'Romeo + Juliet' helped make it a long-lasting chart hit for the band in 1997 and saw it climb to a new peak of No. 2 on the back of the film. The epic soundtrack also featured chart hits from the likes of Des'ree and Kym Mazelle, and peaked in the Top 3 of the UK Singles Chart.

NATASHA BEDINGFIELD
Unwritten
AS FEATURED IN 'ANYONE BUT YOU'

Unbelievably, this '00s classic from the singer-songwriter - the title track from her debut album, no less - only peaked at No. 6 upon initial release, becoming at the time her lowest charting single. However, this year the track has been climbing the UK Singles Chart and has since re-entered the Top 20, all thanks to a scene in the new romantic comedy 'Anyone But You', starring Sydney Sweeney and Glen Powell, which features a duet between the pair whilst stranded at sea on a buoy!



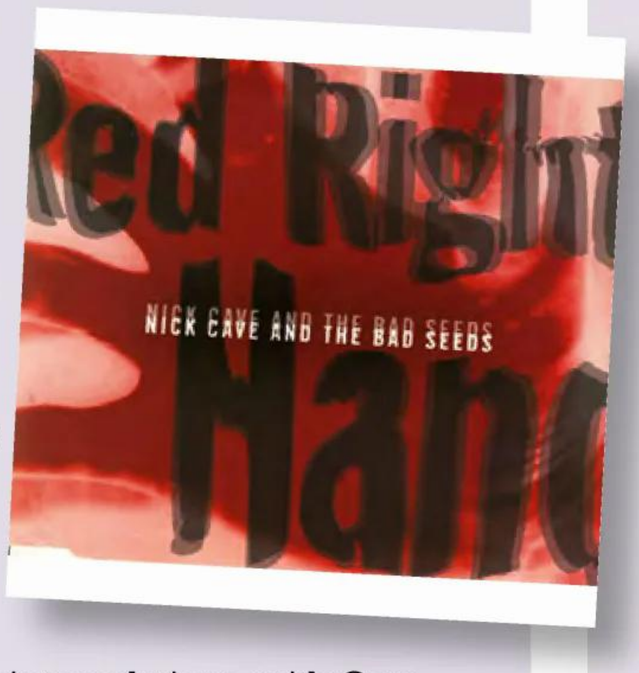
SEAL
Kiss From A Rose
AS FEATURED IN 'BATMAN FOREVER'

Seal's classic *Kiss From A Rose* originally only scraped the Top 20 in 1994, but after being featured heavily in the blockbuster 'Batman Forever', the song rocketed up to reach a peak of No. 4 in the UK one year later. It fared even better on the Billboard charts where it went from not charting at all to being a No. 1 hit for the British singer-songwriter. It remains his biggest-selling single with a 2× Platinum certification in the UK.

LADY GAGA
Bloody Mary
AS FEATURED IN 'WEDNESDAY'

Never originally released from its parent album 'Born This Way' (2011), *Bloody Mary* by Lady Gaga received a major resurgence thanks to Netflix's biggest show of all time, 'Wednesday', which featured the lead titular character dancing to the tune during a high school prom scene. Jenna Ortega's moves helped the track become a viral sensation on TikTok and it climbed to a peak of No. 22 on the UK Singles chart, while just missing out a Top 40 positioning in the US, where it peaked at No. 41.

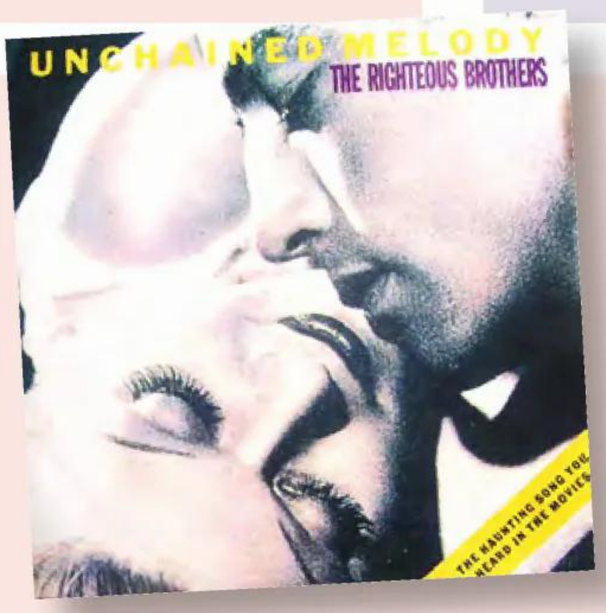
NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS
Red Right Hand
AS FEATURED IN 'PEAKY BLINDERS'



A notable track in many different franchises, it was 'Peaky Blinders' in particular that boosted Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds' *Red Right Hand*. The cult classic has since had artists as eclectic as Snoop Dogg and Arctic Monkeys create their own covers or interpolations, with Cave himself saying: "So many people come up to me and say, 'I'm a huge fan', and have discovered my music through 'Peaky Blinders'." Eagle-eyed horror fans will also notice it in many of the 'Scream' films.

QUEEN
Bohemian Rhapsody
AS FEATURED IN 'WAYNE'S WORLD'

For lifelong Queen fans, it's the iconic visual of Freddie Mercury, Brian May, Roger Taylor and John Deacon that springs to mind at the mention of *Bohemian Rhapsody*, but a new generation of fans discovered the anthem in the '90s when the song appeared in the 1992 comedy drama 'Wayne's World'. On the back of its inclusion in a singalong car scene, the track leapt up the charts, surpassing its original US peak of No. 9 and hitting No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100. It also received an updated music video, which ended up being one of MTV's most-played clips of the year.



THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS
Unchained Melody
AS FEATURED IN 'GHOST'

Unchained Melody launched to the top of the UK Singles Chart after the Righteous Brothers' recording was used in the 1990 movie 'Ghost'. Due to licensing issues, they re-recorded the song for release, but with the original version also reissued it led to both appearing simultaneously on the charts worldwide. The new version subsequently received a Grammy Award nomination, while in the UK *Unchained Melody* became the best-selling single of 1990.

LIZZO
Truth Hurts
AS FEATURED IN 'SOMEONE GREAT'

Originally released in 2017, then-up-and-coming star Lizzo didn't dent the charts with *Truth Hurts*, but it became a viral sleeper hit in 2019 after gaining popularity on TikTok and being used in the Netflix movie 'Someone Great'. The song was later included as a bonus track on the deluxe version of Lizzo's third studio album, 'Cuz I Love You' (2019), and reached No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, becoming her first song to do so, and also the longest-running No. 1 for a solo song by a female rapper.

PHOTO LAURA LEWIS

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Super

nOvas

This year, **Bananarama** are revisiting 40+ years of hits with their epic new retrospective, 'Glorious: The Ultimate Collection' - and if one thing's for sure, it's that Sara Dallin and Keren Woodward are still loving life as part of the world's best girl group!

WORDS SIMON BUTTON

Continuing to celebrate more than four decades as the world's most successful girl group, Bananarama are releasing a new best-of that couldn't be better named.

They're calling it 'Glorious - The Ultimate Collection' - and, with 40 career-spanning tracks on the CD and vinyl versions and a third disc of remixes on the deluxe CD and digital packages, it's glorious indeed.

As they sit down to celebrate one of the greatest careers in pop history - a record-breaking one at that - Sara Dallin and Keren Woodward more than live up to the promise of their latest release!

NOW OR NEVER

"We use that word all the time, so it just seemed like the obvious choice," says Sara of the title, as Keren deadpans: "It's been around for a long time." So have Bananarama, who have been making music (originally with Siobhan Fahey, then with Jacquie O'Sullivan and eventually as a duo for the bulk of their career) since their 1983 debut album, 'Deep Sea Skiving'.

With more than 30 entries in the Top 50 of the UK Singles Chart, they're Guinness World Record holders, although not all 30 of them are included on 'Glorious'. As Sara explains: "We thought, 'Why just do a greatest hits again?' The singles have been out so many times on different formats so we thought, 'Let's also put some of our favourite tracks on that weren't singles'.

"There's still lots of hits but it was very difficult to come up with a final selection. Obviously, you look at the '80s ones with nostalgia, so they'll always have their place, but we're really proud of all of the stuff that we've done, even if some of it wasn't massively successful. How do you judge success anyway? For me, it's just being able to write and record stuff and enjoy what we do."

Keren adds: "Also it's summing up four decades and it had to encompass all of that. Sara and I feel that some of our best stuff has been done in recent years. I mean, I love our last album [2022's magnificent 'Masquerade] possibly more than any other. It's a personal satisfaction of thinking that what you're doing is still good.

> **"The thought when we were younger that you could still be doing this at our age would have been absolutely ludicrous!"**
>
> **KEREN**

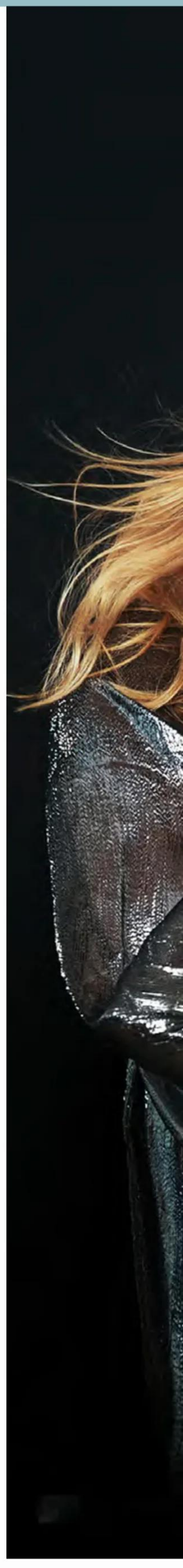
"There's an appreciation that comes from that and whether everyone gets to hear it is almost irrelevant. Hopefully this will bring attention to tracks that maybe some people haven't necessarily loved over the years, but they will start to love them now."

Thus, alongside the usual suspects like *Cruel Summer*, *Robert De Niro's Waiting*, *Love In The First Degree*, *Preacher Man* and *Move In My Direction* we also get a 'Disco Chic' version of *Movin' On*, fan-favourite deep cuts like *I Could Be Persuaded* and *La La Love*, and all the singles from 'Masquerade' and its predecessor 'In Stereo' (2019). The album was trailed by instant classic, *Feel The Love*, and boasts another new track in electro-pop stomper *Supernova*.

Turns out there are more new songs. "We thought, 'We might as well do a new track for it', and then we ended up doing four or six or something like that," Keren reveals. "You go, 'Let's do another one', and then you end up loving them all. So it was actually more difficult choosing the two that went on."

What has happened to those other tracks, then? "They're in the vaults," Sara teases, "and maybe they'll emerge at some point". Along with their versions of ABBA's *Summer Night City* and Cerrone's disco classic *Supernature* perhaps? Will we ever get to hear those on an official release? They're not sure about that, although Keren boasts: "Our version of *Summer Night City* is bloody brilliant. Whatever they did with harmonies, we added 10 times as many!" Sara laughs. "We really over-egged the pudding but we'd completely forgotten about it until you just reminded us. I think it should go on something sometime."

Asked to pick a favourite song from the new best-of, they both settle on *Masquerade*, with Woodward gushing: "I love Sara's lyrics, I love the whole structure of it, I just love it as a piece of music." Dallin chimes in with: "It was really a happy time as well, because we went to our friend's place in Puglia to film the video and it was a really nice experience. When I hear that song it takes me back to being with friends and having a good time."



> How do you judge success anyway? For me, it's just being able to write and record stuff and enjoy what we do...
>
> SARA

Bananarama (l-r): Sara Dallin and Keren Woodward

“Whether it’s sexism or ageism or whatever, we’ve just tackled everything head on!”
KEREN

CRAZY

In April the duo are doing two shows at the London Palladium, followed by Mighty Hoopla in June and an '80s Classical Show in Leeds in July. And yes, they'll be doing plenty of the oldies. "We'd never drop the old songs," Keren insists. "When you get that feedback there's nothing like it. When a whole crowd is singing along, waving their arms, you stop singing and they're singing it for you, nothing really beats that for me."

But expect newer material too, with Sara saying: "We were always quite tentative about putting loads of new stuff in but as we've gone along we put more and more new material in there and crowds just love it. They're there for the whole vibe of the group and the music, and it's not like 'Oh, we must hear *I Want You Back*'."

Keren picks up the thread. "It really is about the vibe. We tend to think: 'Can you dance to it? Yes you can. Well, then it can go in'. I think the Palladium shows are going to be a massive dance fest. Hopefully everyone will stand up at the beginning and not sit down because they'll be too busy boogieing. And we're really excited about the classical show. Who knows? That could be a whole new way to go."

This far into their career they don't have a bucket list. They're just happily bouncing along, with Sara musing: "In the last five or 10 years, the whole thing has changed. There's so many opportunities now for bands that have been going since the '80s. It doesn't seem to grind to a halt. Suddenly, we're headlining festivals and we've got three nights at the Palladium. You have to pinch yourself and think, 'Wow, we've still got those opportunities'. We're just so lucky and I don't think we've ever had bucket lists or plans. It really is day to day, month to month, 'Do we fancy that? Do we *not* fancy that?'"

Keren adds of the new compilation: "Even this whole thing, which has been in the pipeline for a few years, we kind of scuppered that, almost accidentally, by recording an album of our own with 'Masquerade'. It was lockdown so we thought we might as well do some writing and before you know it, it was a single, an EP and then a full album. It was never really planned in any way, shape or form and that's sort of how we've always worked." Sara smiles. "We don't even ever plan to do albums per se. One of us will have an idea and we'll go in and record something, and then it just seems to escalate into albums each time. We just really love writing."

They also really love performing. "We're there to celebrate and have fun, and if it goes a bit wrong we don't care," Sara beams. "It's really unpretentious. It's not like, 'We must get it all right'. We're professional but we're also there to have fun and it's spontaneous." Keren laughs: "There's some loose choreography, which sometimes we do and sometimes we don't. Sometimes you're having so much fun you forget to do it. When you go and see someone live you can absolutely tell if they love what they do from the vibe that they give off from the stage. I do think that we have sheer joy on our side."

> **"We were never dressed up and put in the latest gear. We've always had a hand in everything we do."**
>
> **SARA**

Along with the album there's 'Glorious - The Book', which explores Bananarama's relationship with fashion as it chronicles their outfits through the years with rarely-seen archival photos and memorabilia. Do they see themselves as fashion icons? "Um, sometimes," Keren laughs. But Sara reckons: "I think we kind of were back in the day. We were never dressed up and put in the latest gear. We've always had a hand in everything we do."

As well as the Guinness World Records honour, Keren reveals she was the Bethnal Green beer drinking champion in 1982 and Sara was apparently county swimming champion when growing up in Bristol. But breaking America ranks considerably higher for Dallin on her list of achievements. "We were thrilled about the homegrown hits, but when we actually made it in America that was fantastic. It's a whole different world when you go out there, and still to this day the Americans have taken *Cruel Summer* to their hearts. We get about two or three requests every month for it to be used in a TV show or something."

When it comes to the huge treasure trove of Bananarama songs, does it irk them that casual fans might not know that they wrote or co-wrote most of the tracks on 'Glorious' as well as across their whole catalogue? "I think we got over that way back when," Keren says. "But I think most people know we

write our own material," Sara adds. "And I think that's definitely one of the keys to our longevity, to be honest. It's not contrived."

FEEL THE LOVE

After the '80s Classical show in July, they have a few plans for the rest of the year which they're not at liberty to reveal just yet. Whatever transpires, they now have their own In Synk record label and they're in the enviable position of being able to do whatever they want. Woodward is very happy about that. "It was a long time coming to the realisation, even though we've always done our own thing, that you could actually do everything yourself. That comes with the experience we've had and realising that, actually, we know as much as anyone else around us. You have specific people you work with on specific things, but when it gets to the point where you're totally in control, it's brilliant."

Dallin agrees: "We've worked long and hard to get to this point where we can choose what to do. We don't have to fight against things now, we can enjoy what we do and decide when we want to do it. It's not a rat race for us."

As for their work dynamic, Keren demurs to her pal, saying: "Because we run it as a business, we do sort of separate some things out, such as who deals with certain things and who deals with other things. But I have to say Sara is awesome. She's much more on-it and that's the way it's always been. I'm maybe a little more distracted and I have lazy bones. I'm very full-on when we're working but I do have a tendency to sort of sit back and think, 'Great, I've got nothing today'. That's just in my nature and always has been."

Since the '80s, the girls have had a reputation for being a bit scary (although in my many interviews with them I've never found that to be the case). They're friendly and funny, and Sara frowns as she says: "I don't like to think that people might be intimidated by us. I always go out of my way to crack a joke or be really smiley because I think being mean is horrible." But she gets why they've sometimes been bracketed that way. "If you're assertive and if you have an opinion then that kind of frightens people. But we're not rude or aggressive to people. When we started out we were three girls together and we'd all be giggling on a chair somewhere in the green room and people would think, 'Oh God, they're probably really bitchy', but it just wasn't that way. It was because we were ridiculously shy and had no confidence."

The '80s remain their most financially and statistically successful era. "And we've sort of reclaimed everything we did back then and everything since," Sara feels. "I listened to Clare Grogan from Altered

"When you go and see someone live you can absolutely tell if they love what they do from the vibe that they give off from the stage. I do think that we have sheer joy on our side."

KEREN

PHOTOS MARK MATTOCK, JACK ALEXANDER, ALMA ROSAZ

Images talking about it and she was saying how she was sort of dismissed as being just a bit fluffy, and she said: 'I loved my first few albums and they were great'. That's kind of like us too. We're reclaiming how much we've achieved and how much we've done ourselves. We've earned the right to be here and play at Glastonbury [which they did in 2019] and do all these things that the male bands do."

Being in a girl band comes with its own challenges, and ageism and sexism still rear their ugly heads, but as Keren points out: "I think there's a lot that still comes up about being women in this industry, but I'm so thrilled to find that for the first time ever most of the highest chart positions were held by women last year. When we started, it was kind of us, Kim Wilde and that was it really, so it's hugely satisfying. The thought when we were younger that you could still be doing this at our age would have been absolutely ludicrous. Unless you were like a Shirley Bassey-type singer, it was unheard of really."

With Sara nodding in agreement, Keren grins proudly. "Whether it's sexism or ageism or whatever, we've just tackled everything head on. We've been incredibly tenacious and determined through thick and thin. We're bulldozers!" **RP**

● ***'Glorious: The Ultimate Collection' and 'Glorious - The Book' are out March 8 on London. Bananarama play the London Palladium on April 3, 4 and 6. Tickets are on sale now.***

ONTO A WINNER

As the classic second album from **Lily Allen** turns 15, we revisit her glorious 2009 LP, 'It's Not Me, It's You'!

WORDS FABIO MAGNOCAVALLO

The summer of 2006 saw breakthrough star Lily Allen emerge from a MySpace sensation to a global chart success.

Her debut album, the reggae-pop-infused 'Alright, Still', showcased her witty, autobiographical songwriting talents, uncompromising attitude, and a songstress who was here to stay.

Despite Allen's quick rise to becoming a household name, it wouldn't be until 2009 when her sophomore release, the ethereal and more polished 'It's Not Me, It's You', would cement her as a pop icon - a record we revisit 15 years later.

BACK TO THE START

Following a manufactured era full of squeaky-clean pop groups and talent show winners, Allen entered the scene as someone rough around the edges. She had her own style, wrote her own songs, and certainly wasn't afraid to speak her mind. Before the likes of Adele, Duffy, and Kate Nash made any impact on the charts, there had been a slight shift in the industry. Female singer-songwriters had taken centre stage and Allen was at the forefront of this movement.

Signing a five-album deal in 2005 with Regal Recordings, an imprint of Parlophone Records, for just £25,000, her label seemingly didn't anticipate much success for Allen and was more focused on upcoming releases from their already-established acts Coldplay and Gorillaz. In her 2018 autobiography, 'My Thoughts Exactly', Allen reflected on the shady deal: "It was an atrocious deal. [...] That's a low investment, low-risk deal for them, and it showed how little Parlophone valued me when they took me on."

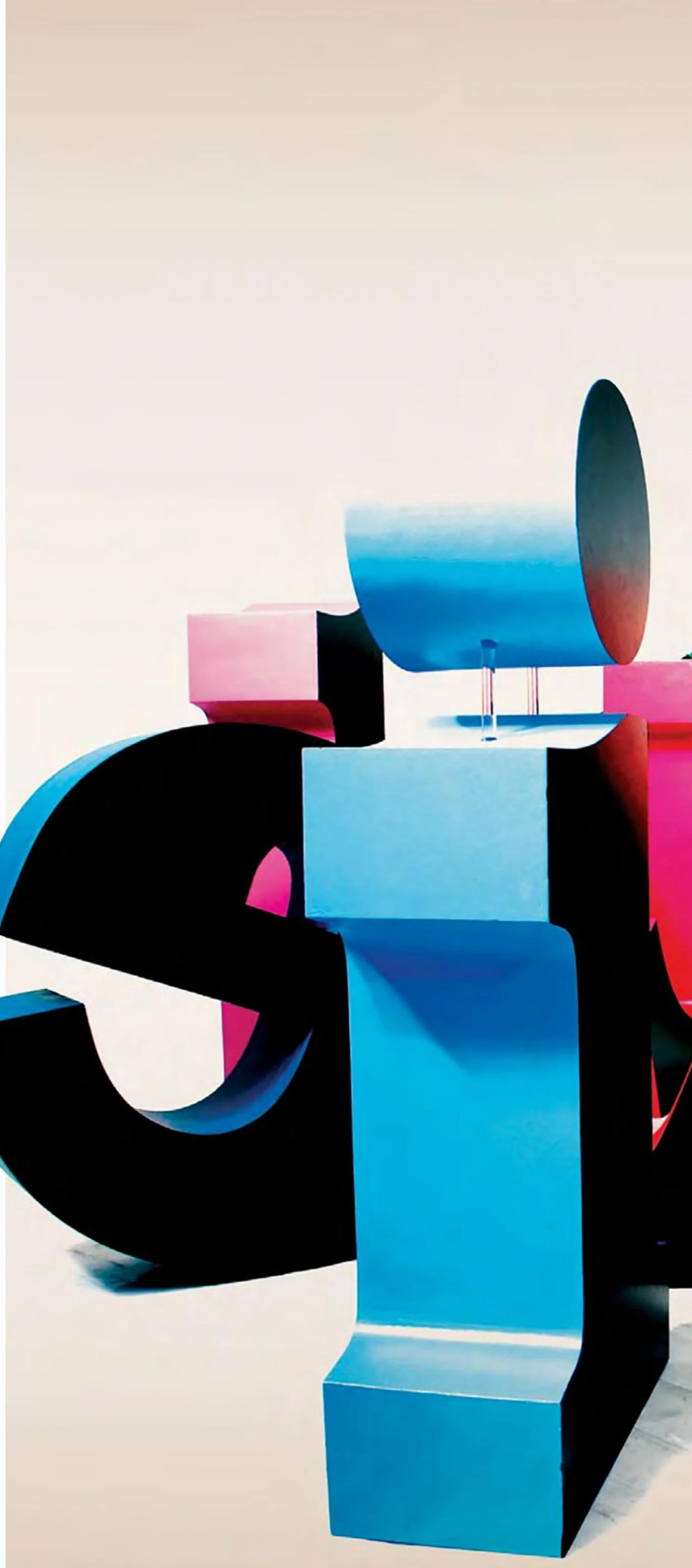
Despite their limited expectations, 'Alright, Still' proved her label wrong as it went on to be a critical and commercial triumph, shifting over 2.6 million copies globally. Following the runaway success, a lot was riding on Allen; being a young woman in the industry, she had gathered a lot of tabloid attention and found herself making headlines for anything

but her musical talents. Allen needed to prove that she was no fluke but most importantly, she wanted to be taken seriously as a songwriter. When she set to write and record her sophomore LP, the then-twenty-something turned to Greg Kurstin, who had co-written and produced three songs on her debut, to help create the whole thing.

"I wanted to work with one person from start to finish to make it one body of work. I wanted it to feel like it had some sort of integrity. I think I've grown up a bit as a person and I hope it reflects that," she said in a statement. After gaining live experience the first time around, Allen wanted to create something that would reverberate with a crowd. She added: "We decided to try and make bigger sounding, more ethereal songs, real songs." Allen originally planned to title the album 'Stuck On The Naughty Step', however after living with the title for so long, she opted for 'It's Not Me, It's You'.

In anticipation of the release, Allen took to her MySpace page several times to share the album's demos with fans. The first two in April 2008 were *I Could Say* and *I Don't Know*, the latter becoming the album's lead single and later renamed to *The Fear*. Two months later, Allen shared another song, titled *Guess Who Batman*, which would also change its title to *Fuck You*.

A fourth song, *Who'd Of Known*, was also uploaded to MySpace. Allen initially told fans on her blog that this song would not be included on the album, revealing she had "ripped off the chorus from Take That [*Shine*] and can't be bothered with the paperwork." That said, the song would end up featuring on the album under *Who'd Have Known* with Take That receiving a writer's credit. In October, Allen shared *Everyone's At It* and announced it would be the album's lead single. On her blog, she informed fans that she was shooting its music video. Teasing that a famous face would be appearing in the clip, she posted a snapshot of someone by a bathtub who looked a lot like Prince. However, a couple of months



before the album's release, *The Fear* was chosen as the lead single from 'It's Not Me, It's You'. To this day, the shelved music video for *Everyone's At It* has yet to be seen and it is still unknown whether the mystery man in the image was indeed Prince.

Recording a portion of the album in a cottage located in Moreton-in-Marsh, Allen discussed the creative process in her book. She recalled: "We had to have the curtains drawn all the time because a bunch of kids cottoned on to us being there, and they'd listen in, tapping away in time and trying to learn the lyrics I was banging out. You can hear them singing along on some of the early demos."

THE FEAR

Released in December 2008, the album's lead single, *The Fear*, was no subtle introduction to a spellbinding new era. Written about the pressures of fame, her views on celebrity lifestyles and her concerns surrounding the growth of social media, Allen seemingly predicted today's self-obsessed culture before the launch of Instagram and the rise of Twitter. *'I want to be rich and I want lots of money / I don't care about clever, I don't care about funny / I want loads of clothes and fuckloads of diamonds / I heard people die while they are trying to find them',* she angelically sings on the song's opening verse.

Despite her criticism and the song's sarcastic nature, Allen admits in the lyrics that she isn't immune to what she's singing about as she is also guilty of being sucked into the exact same culture. *'And I am a weapon of massive consumption / And it's not my fault, it's how I'm programmed to function,'* she sings, before referencing famous tabloid newspapers she is commonly featured in: *'I'll look at The Sun and I'll look in The Mirror / I'm on the right track, yeah, I'm on to a winner.'*

Its fairytale-like music video was principally shot at Wrest Park in Luton and directed by Nez (M.I.A., The Streets, Bruno Mars). It begins with Allen looking out the window of a

caravan next to a washing line. Before we know it, she enters a mansion and is welcomed to a bunch of chaos; from dancing butlers to balloons and presents that come to life, the visual was inspired by a famous fantasy story. "When I heard the track for the first time I immediately thought of 'Alice In Wonderland', and built my idea from then," director Nez said.

"I'd always thought she was singing about herself. It almost feels like she's one person some of the time, and then another at other times - she is taking the piss out of consumerism, but there's also some seriousness about it too. Hence the title: *The Fear*"

Reflecting on the writing process nearly 10 years later, Allen told The Guardian in 2018: "It's funny, because when I wrote it, it was meant to be quite tongue-in-cheek and sarcastic, but it's become quite literal now, sadly. I was spending a lot of time on MySpace and I guess just starting to know Twitter and it felt like people were putting across a version of themselves that wasn't necessarily 'true'. In its infancy, social media felt liberating. And then it felt quite immediately, quite false. I think *The Fear* was my reaction to those falsehoods."

The Fear was well-received by critics for both its clever lyrical content and electro-pop production. Commercially, the song was an instant hit on the charts and remains one of her most successful. Becoming her second No. 1 in the UK, *The Fear* knocked Lady Gaga's *Just Dance* off the top spot and remained there for a whole month. During its third week at the top, 'It's Not Me, It's You' finally hit shelves after months of anticipation and became Allen's first chart-topping album, achieving a chart double. Relishing in her victories, she told the Official Charts: "It's great being at the top of both charts, especially in the same week as the BRIT Awards are once again celebrating the best of British music."

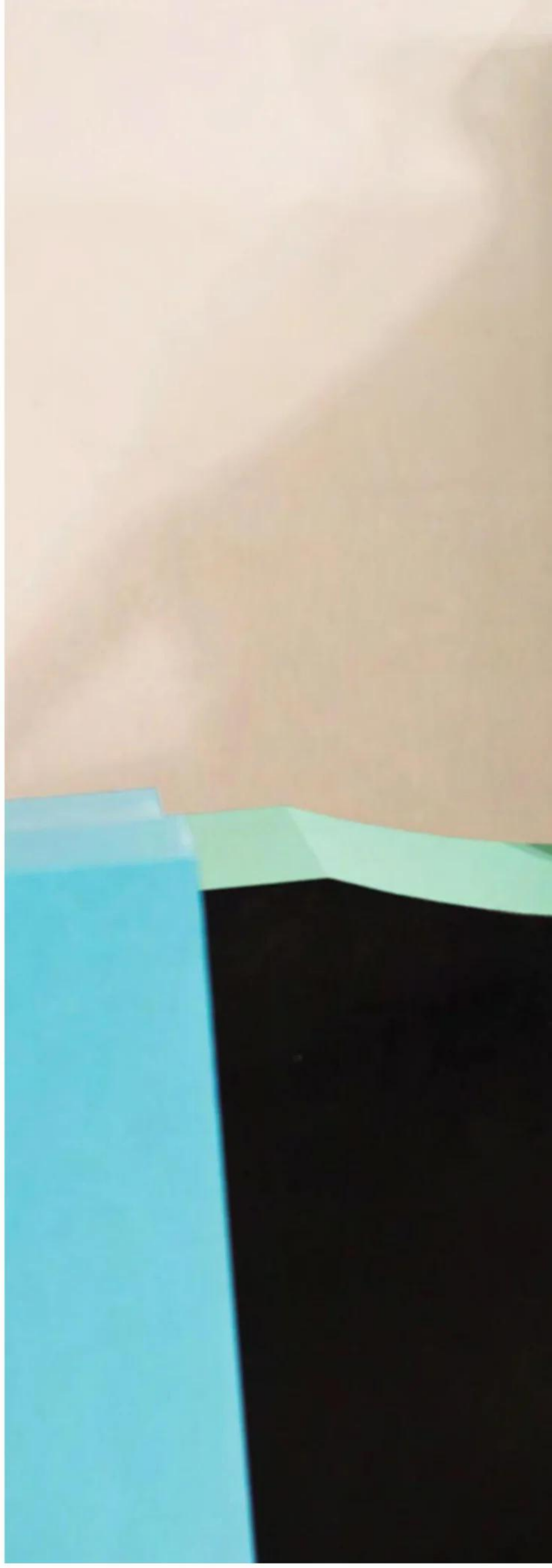
Claiming the top spot on her home turf, the album also reached No. 1 in Canada and Australia and debuted in the Top 5 in the US after topping the iTunes chart. Avoiding the so-called sophomore slump, Allen had proved that she was the real deal and no gimmick.

Following her usage of old reggae samples and heavy influence from ska and hip-hop on 'Alright, Still', its production felt distorted in places. For 'It's Not Me, It's You', Allen and Kurstin took on a different approach that resulted in a smooth-sailing album with a dreamy, timeless feel. Embracing a more cohesive sound, the pair created a 12-track set influenced by electro-pop with hints of country and jazz. On the flip side, while its production can be boxed into one genre, its lyrical content throughout focuses on various subjects from drugs (*Everyone's At It*), celebrity culture (*The Fear*), bad sex (*Not Fair*), politics (*Fuck You*), God (*Him*), and daddy issues (*He Wasn't There*), to name a few. Posing on a giant L for the cover, its playful artwork matches the light-hearted persona Allen portrays throughout the record.

WHO'D HAVE KNOWN

Keeping the wheels in motion, *Not Fair* was chosen as the first single post the album's release. Experimenting with country and bluegrass, Allen wrote the song about a relationship with the perfect boyfriend who is selfish and lazy in bed. True to form, she sings the song innocently while expressing her serious concerns: *'There's just one thing / That's getting in the way / When we go up to bed / You're just no good / It's such a shame / I look into your eyes / I want to get to know you / And then you make this noise / And it's apparent it's all over.'*

Never revealing the mystery man whom the song was about, Allen insisted in a December 2008 interview with Observer Music Monthly that the ex-boyfriend was likely unaware himself. She said: "The person in question is far too arrogant to consider that it might be about them. It would not even cross his mind for a second. He's heard it, I've played it to him. And he had no idea. Didn't even ask."



Accompanied by a 1970s-inspired music video, it was directed by Melina Matsoukas (Beyoncé, Rihanna, No Doubt) and filmed in Los Angeles. The video shows Allen as a performing guest on 'The Porter Wagoner Show', with the video opening with a dubbed intro of Porter Wagoner welcoming Allen to the programme. Singing and dancing alongside a country and western band, the visual was recorded on videotape and with a real vacuum tube TV camera to capture the essence of the era. Proving to be another hit, *Not Fair* scored Allen another Top 5 hit across Europe and Australia.

Internationally, *Fuck You* became the

PHOTOS SERGE LEBLON

third single from 'It's Not Me, It's You'. With its catchy, nursery rhyme-style melody, you could argue that this is Allen's most recognisable song in some territories. With music publications at the time stating the song was a protest against the then-American president George W. Bush or that it was aimed at the BNP (British National Party), the song has since become a middle finger anthem for any relevant situation.

Solidifying the song's relevance over a decade later, US singer Olivia Rodrigo invited Allen to perform the song at Glastonbury in June 2022 and dedicated the rendition to the five conservative U.S. Supreme Court justices who ended the right to an abortion under the federal constitution.

Following the mid-tempo *22*, penned about women pushing 30 who "haven't figured out what they want to do with themselves" and "rely on their looks," Allen slowed down the pace by closing the album campaign with the tender love ballad, *Who'd Have Known*. After receiving Take That's permission to record the song, she hoped the group would join her. "I was looking forward to doing a video with them, me and Mark Owen holding hands," she told The Guardian. They declined. However, they did perform a mash-up of their two songs at the Royal Albert Hall for Children In Need.

With her initial plan out the window, Allen recruited James Caddick to make the song's visual, which was contrary to its romantic lyrical content. Allen portrays an obsessed stalker of Elton John who picks him up from his house and kidnaps him. At her home, she ties him to a chair and tries to entertain him. As Allen falls asleep on her sofa, John manages to wriggle free from the tied ropes on his feet and escapes.

When award season arrived, Allen's wish to be taken seriously as a songwriter came true. She had beaten out competition Florence + The Machine, Bat For Lashes, Leona Lewis, and Pixie Lott at the 2010 BRIT Awards in the category of British Female Solo Artist while earning Best Track for *The Fear* at the Q Awards. Allen and Kurstin took home Songwriters Of The Year and Best Song Musically and Lyrically at the prestigious Ivor Novello Awards. Additionally, Allen won a third trophy on the day for PRS for Music Most Performed Work. Overwhelmed, the singer accepted her award in tears.

Commercially, Allen was also at an all-time high; 'It's Not Me, It's You' became her second album to be certified triple platinum in the UK after 78 weeks on the chart. In Australia, the LP is listed as one of the best-selling albums of the decade, achieving quadruple platinum status.

Despite constant victories, it would be five years until Allen would next appear on the charts. Temporarily waving goodbye to the industry, she took time out to start a family with her then-husband, Sam Cooper. "Just so you know, I have not renegotiated my record contract and have no plans to make another record. I do however remain a fan of new music, so this is not some selfish crusade," she wrote on her MySpace blog.

In the five years away from the spotlight, Allen's legacy could be heard loud and clear in the artists that would emerge. From Marina to Eliza Doolittle, Ellie Goulding, and Charli XCX, a gang of female singer-songwriters would rise to the surface and fill the gap Allen left open. **RP**

Hue And Cry (l-r): Greg and Pat Kane

NEW BEGINNINGS

With a year-long 40th anniversary celebration - including a wealth of unheard material from the vaults and a UK tour - and a brand new album set for next year, **Hue And Cry** are going from strength to strength!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

When it comes to celebrating the past four decades, Hue And Cry are starting out on a better footing than many.

The Scottish duo, starring brothers Greg and Pat Kane, have unearthed a treasure trove of rare and previously-unheard recordings dating back to the early-'80s and, along with clippings and memorabilia from across the years, which they plan to share over the coming months in what's a dream project for fans.

It's set to lead into brand new music in 2025, but sitting down to look back on the past, Hue And Cry make one thing clear: there's still plenty of unfinished business between the sophisti-pop siblings.

SHOWTIME!

"We've moved offices and houses so many times and there were boxes and boxes of stuff that I kept walking past during lockdown and thinking, 'I should really start opening these up'," laughs Greg of the origins of their exercise in nostalgia. "I didn't have a cassette deck, so I ended up buying one on eBay for 500 quid, and the first cassette I picked up said 'Wembley'. I thought, 'Surely that's not us at Wembley Stadium playing with Madonna?', put it on and it was - and it sounded brilliant!"

It turns out the gig was recorded when *Labour Of Love* - the 1987 second single from their debut album, 'Seduced And Abandoned' - was riding high in the charts at No. 6. "The whole place went bananas," he smiles, while revealing he also uncovered 200 pieces of music that have remained unheard, 200 newspaper clippings and nearly 150 photographs.

"If someone's doing a PhD in sophisti-pop, this is the real story of the evolution of a band throughout certain points in history," adds Pat. "You can be musicological about it and say, 'What is the process from my demo to a master? What gets sharpened up and what gets discarded?'"

It proved eye-opening for the duo too, with the vocalist and lyricist continuing: "I was listening to some of it and I was absolutely obsessed with yuppies! I was obsessed with modern working life; people grappling with technology and the false nature of relationships in

large bureaucratic organisations. It's quite interesting in terms of late-'80s, early-'90s culture, because there was quite a lot of upheaval about what it was to be a working creative using technology, which of course is what we're all completely obsessed with in the 2020s. But so many of the songs are about the subtle cruelties of knowledge-led, emotion-led working life, because jobs were moving from manufacturing to information-based jobs and when you listen to the songs, I was obviously picking up on that."

The duo formed in 1983 in Coatbridge, Scotland and their first single, *Here Comes Everybody*, was released on a small Glasgow-based independent label, Stampede, in 1986. Although not a hit, it attracted the interest of Virgin Records subsidiary Circa, which signed Hue And Cry later that year and went on to release their first four albums, through to 1991's 'Stars Crashed Down'. With the label, they scored UK Top 40 hits with *Looking For Linda* and the *Violently* EP, while tunes like *I Refuse*, *Ordinary Angel*, *My Salt Heart*, and the *Love Term Lovers Of Pain* EP also made waves.

Now, they've taken to Patreon to share the unearthed material, which includes Pat and Greg's first recording together, from 1982, and will be shared chronologically as the year progresses, alongside monthly EPs set to appear on digital platforms. "We've had some lovely comments from the people who have joined the Patreon thing," Greg adds. "They said it's a fan's dream and I can see that. I know if there was one for Stevie Wonder or Prince or Ray Charles, can you imagine - I'd pay nine quid a month!"

CRASH DOWN

Before they were Hue And Cry, Greg and Pat were no strangers to the music industry. "I'd been working with other bands since '82 - when I was 15 and Pat was 17 - and he worked with Midge Ure when he was still doing Ultravox, pre-Live Aid," recalls Greg. "So there are bits and pieces from that time too that we'll be sharing."

Another coup for fans is the duo's

"IT WAS FAST - THOSE FIRST FIVE YEARS, WE DIDN'T STOP, BUT IT HAD ITS CONSEQUENCES AND WE WERE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS A LITTLE BIT"

GREG

'lost' third album, recorded prior to 'Bitter Suite' (1989) and rejected by their record company upon its submission. It's a testament to just *how* prolific they were that, in the time since releasing 'Remote' in '88, they completed two albums' worth of material, and having revisited the shelved project the pair are in agreement that it holds up alongside the rest of their catalogue.

"They were done with great musicians, Greg had produced them brilliantly, and the record company said, 'Nah, we don't like it, you've got to write another one'," Pat sighs. "So there's actually a ghost third album, which has just been sitting there and I think some of the songs are brilliant.

"There's a funny song called *Do You Live In London*, which is about my life

> **IF SOMEONE'S DOING A PHD IN SOPHISTI-POP, THIS IS THE REAL STORY OF THE EVOLUTION OF A BAND THROUGHOUT CERTAIN POINTS IN HISTORY**
>
> **PAT**

as a rock critic, then as a freelancer, then finally as a musician, which is probably the poppiest thing we've ever written. But it obviously noised up the London record company who thought, 'No, we don't like that', because we were basically saying that living in London is not all it's cracked up to be. *'Do you live in London and are you happy there? / Do you live in London? The question is unfair.'* To me, it sounds like a Northern Soul classic."

Following their most successful period in the 1980s, Hue And Cry continued to create new material throughout the decade that followed, departing the major label system like many of their peers and navigating an ever-changing and fickle industry as best as they could. Looking back, the sheer volume of their output in those early years pushed them to the limit, both as bandmates and brothers.

"Our manager kept saying to us, 'I don't know how long these guys are going to be around' - about the record company - so it was like, 'keep going, keep going, keep going'," Greg remembers. "It was fast - those first five years, we didn't stop, but it had its consequences and we were at each other's throats a little bit, too."

Pat continues: "In the beginning, we were two immature young men and every fight escalated to a titanic battle. But in the early '90s, when we started to go to different labels, we were essentially artist entrepreneurs - setting up record labels, sometimes with management and sometimes under our own steam. I think it made us realise that, ultimately, we have each other's back and whether that's writing or performing or doing business deals, if we can't defend each other then who else can?"

NEXT MOVE

For context, Hue And Cry released just two albums in the 1980s, compared with an impressive six in the 1990s. Although only two entered the Top 40 of the UK charts, it was enough to sustain a fan base for the pair so that, come 2005 when ITV approached them to appear on 'Hit Me Baby One More Time' - which saw classic pop stars sing their biggest hit along with a cover version of a contemporary track for the public vote - they made it to the final.

"At the time, Gregory was beginning to work with indie bands as a producer and he was really into it, and I even did a few solo gigs under the name Pat Kane, because I didn't know what direction I might go in. And then along came this TV show, which Greg was absolutely opposed to doing," laughs the singer.

"I thought, I wonder if this is a springboard to us taking this seriously again - creatively as well as commercially - and the deal breaker

OUR MANAGER KEPT SAYING TO US, 'I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THESE GUYS ARE GOING TO BE AROUND' - ABOUT THE RECORD COMPANY - SO IT WAS LIKE, 'KEEP GOING, KEEP GOING, KEEP GOING'

GREG

for me was that we weren't going to be standing in front of a jury of Simon Cowell and other reptiles. It was going to be a popular vote, so people would call in and decide who was going to win, which is at least a wee bit democratic and open to the people, rather than being condescended to by wankers you don't respect."

Ultimately, they were beaten by Shakin' Stevens in the grand final, but Greg and Pat took the opportunity to reignite their spark, taking to social media in its earliest days to engage with their fanbase and kickstart a new chapter in their career. "It rebirthed us into a different environment, which was the digital environment, where people were presuming that they got stuff digitally for free," he adds. "But that built a community and if you already had a bit of a community, you could use the tools to amplify what was already there. So from that, we created a sustainable situation where we live off what we want to do with Hue And Cry and I don't think we've had any creative restraints for the last 20 years."

Case in point, the duo's forthcoming electronic album. It's a project that's been a long time coming and one that takes the band in a new direction, while also pushing their talents to new limits. "When we first started making this electronic record, I approached Simple Minds' keyboard player and had a conversation with him," Greg shares. "And I realised there's a lot of smoke and mirrors with electronic music. The more I found out, the more I thought, 'I can do that'. Because when Pat and I play the electronic stuff live, I've got three synthesisers set up, nothing's sequenced, and it can go wrong, which sometimes it does. But a lot of these people are just pressing play on a computer. So I wanted to still retain the liveness of what Pat and I do but in electronica land, and we've managed to achieve it."

Looking ahead, he adds: "So we will celebrate our 40th anniversary in 2024. We'll reach out to all these millions of people that liked what we do and connect with them again. And in 2025, there'll be a brand new electronic record for them to enjoy. Because I think they'll have completely pegged out on archive Hue And Cry at the end of 2024 and it will be a release and a relief for them to get a new record at the end."

Offering one final teaser, Pat says: "We're trying to figure out what to call this record. We're not going to call it this, but it really is a cosmic folk record

PHOTOS DOUGIE SOUNESS

> **IT DEFINITELY DOES NOT FEEL AS IF WE'VE GONE DOWN A BLIND ALLEY. IT FEELS LIKE WE'VE OPENED OUT ONTO A BIG VISTA.**
>
> **PAT**

- and I'll tell you what I mean by that. When we were recording, we did a lot of research into NASA sound samples, because one of the songs had a space metaphor, and I'm not kidding you that a deep space quasar sounds like Giorgio Moroder. If you actually listen to the sounds, it's a pulse and a sequence. That's what the universe sounds like.

"I was immediately inspired by this because I was literally in a cosmic space, so in terms of the future I would love to work more with these machines. There may be combinations of that with real musicians, but we've just done the classic thing that you're supposed to do in rock and roll and, in the words of John Donne, 'make one room an everywhere'. That's exactly what we've done with this record and whether it bears the estimation that we have for it is in the ear of the beholder, but it definitely does not feel as if we've gone down a blind alley. It feels like we've opened out onto a big vista." **RP**

Hue and Cry's 40th Anniversary tour starts October 10. Tickets are on sale now. 'The Labour Of Love' series is released monthly.

Shine a light

In the early 1990s, **Rozalla** went global with a run of dance smashes that made her one of the biggest names on the planet - and with her epic new album, 'Turn On The Light', she proves she's still got it!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

Little did a young Rozalla know, at the age of 11 while appearing on TV in Zambia, that less than two decades later she'd be one of the world's most successful dance acts of all time.

Having made waves with her debut album in Africa, she headed to the UK in the early 1990s and went global with a string of mega-hit records, spearheaded of course by the iconic *Everybody's Free (To Feel Good)*.

Now, more than 25 years after she released her last dance album, Rozalla returns this month with 'Turn On The Light' - a triumphant comeback that leans into her biggest '90s anthems while pushing her sound forward.

SAY IT AGAIN

"This album has been in the making for over three years now," says the singer of her latest project, stacked with recent singles including ▶

Lovefool, *I Want You Back*, *I Feel It Slipping Away* and *Magnificent*. She corrects herself: "Actually, forget three years - it's been over 25 years, really!"

That's since she released 'Coming Home' in 1998, the most recent Rozalla dance album (the easy listening 'Brand New Me' was released in 2009 under her full name, Rozalla Miller). So why *now*, on the 35th anniversary of 'Spirit Of Africa' - her first long-player - is Rozalla back in the studio recording new material?

"With *Everybody's Free* and *Faith* and *Are You Ready To Fly*, my career was at an all time high, I signed with Sony and I toured with Michael Jackson. I got to travel the world and it was great - and because I was young, I thought it would last forever," she sighs. "But then the girl bands and boy bands started happening and, after I was dropped by Sony, I was lucky if I was getting one or two gigs a month, after being used to five or seven a week."

As the face of the industry changed, so too did her vision for the future. "Music was how I earned my living and it got scary, so I took a course as a beauty therapist, thinking that one day I'd open up my own beauty salon, because you don't want to find yourself up against a wall and realise you've left it too late," Rozalla adds, revealing in that time she kept in touch with agents and managers, did music on the side and even met her husband. And yes, she got recognised by a few massage clients too!

But when Gary Simmons, head of Energise Records, pitched recording a new album, she didn't take much convincing. "I just thought, 'Why not?'," she shrugs, revealing they planned the collection to include a mix of original dance tracks, obscure covers from the '60s and '70s, and mid-tempo ballads. "The new single, *Lotta Love*, was done by a lady called Nicolette Larson, who sadly passed away when she was very young," Rozalla says of the track, penned by Neil Young and also recorded for his 'Comes A Time' (1978) album. "We were just having fun with songs like *Baby Come Back* [Player, 1977] and *Someone That I Used To Love* [Natalie Cole, 1980], which will hopefully surprise people who only know me as a dance artist."

Then there are the originals, such as the vibrant title song; a semi-autobiographical number which, much like the other new cuts on the LP, was co-written by Rozalla. "My husband said, 'Why don't you write lyrics about your life and your career?', so if you listen to the song it's talking about the ups and downs of my career. Sometimes I feel low and when I get out on stage and sing my songs, the lights come up and I see the audience's reaction and it makes me realise I'm where I need to be. And I love it!"

LOTTA LOVE

When we chat, Rozalla's just home from a trip to Africa where, as well as performing, she was able to spend time with her family before enduring the 14 hour journey home. Running on empty and little sleep, she's a ball of energy - an infectious positivity that she credits for making it through the tough times in her life.

> ***I think that when you put things out there, life helps you to get as near as you possibly can to them***

"Honestly, I have a zest for living and I absolutely love my life," she beams. "Whenever arrows of darkness are thrown at me, I might get down but then I look at my life and think, 'One day, we'll all leave Mother Earth, so what do I want to do?' I want to live my life the best that I can, do what I love and love the people that love me. I absolutely love performing; I love going out on that stage and singing for the fans. Seeing the smiles on their faces means the world to me and that keeps me going. That keeps me wanting to do show after show as long as I get the opportunity."

There was a time she started to plan her retirement, but after connecting with her former manager, John Arnison, who also looks after Billy Ocean, she made a U-turn. "I joked with him when I spoke to him a few months ago, saying: 'I need to earn this money so I can retire.' And he said: 'Seriously, retire? Why would you retire when you still get so many opportunities? What are you going to do?'," she recalls.

"He's like a father figure to me and he told me that Billy did his farewell tour before Covid, but after a couple of years called him and said, 'I'm bored out of my mind, I don't know whether I'm coming or going', and now he's back in the game. So now I'm gonna do this for the foreseeable and go with the flow."

Not only in fine voice, Rozalla - who keenly points out she turns 60 this year - has the visage of someone half her age. "My sister said to me: 'You made a deal with the devil!'," she laughs, admitting: "My husband keeps looking at me and going: 'Tell me the truth. Have you had Botox?' and I'm like, 'No, I've never had ▶

"I signed with Sony and I toured with Michael Jackson. I got to travel the world and it was great – and because I was young, I thought it would last forever..."

“Sometimes I feel low and when I get out on stage and sing my songs, the lights come up and I see the audience’s reaction and it makes me realise I’m where I need to be”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Botox!'. Not that I'm against it; I go to a lady who does all those things and I keep asking if I need it, and she's like, 'No! Get out of my office, bitch, you're my worst client!' Which I appreciate, because she could just do it and charge me. I've tried fillers before and I absolutely freaking love it, but honestly I attribute it mostly to good genes and face yoga, which has really made a difference in my life."

MAGNIFICENT

The title song from 'Turn On The Light' features a reference to Rozalla's biggest hit, *Everybody's Free (To Feel Good)*, which peaked at No. 6 in the UK, went Top 10 across Europe and gave her the first of three US Club No. 1s. But after scoring such a massive success, how did she navigate the pressure to live up to heightened expectations - from the label, her fans and herself - over the albums that followed.

"I went through that, but then around 15 years ago I decided I wasn't going to let it get me down, because the fact is you can never recreate something that was so big because life keeps evolving," she shrugs. "I would love to have another hit like *Everybody's Free (To Feel Good)* - who wouldn't - but also, I've always wanted to move on and do different styles of music and not get so caught up in this dance music diva thing, which I have been and which I probably still am to a point. And I'm grateful for that, but also there's been a downside to it and now I want to do some ballads and some mid-tempos, which I think we've achieved on this album."

Its poignance becomes apparent as she remembers her late father, who passed away in 1990, and told her: "My girl, you've really got a good voice and when you sing those dance songs it comes across - but not as well as when you do a ballad. That's when you really hear it."

From a young age Rozalla knew music was the avenue for her; she grew up listening to western music on the radio and, when she moved to Zimbabwe, joined a band called GRAB - an acronym for its four members - and would play popular hits along with one or two African songs thrown in. After a couple of years, she decided to go it alone and entered a local talent competition, in which she won a record deal and recorded her own material locally, becoming well known in the country and attracting early media coverage.

"When I look back at my life, if you believe in manifesting and stuff like that, I think that when you put things out there life helps you to get as near as you possibly can to them," she smiles, revealing a chance meeting with a UK record producer holidaying in the area helped introduce her to local DJ John Matinde on Harare's Radio 3 station, who sponsored her flight to the UK in 1989 to record her debut album.

As word started to get out that there was a new star in town, letters began arriving from industry giants including Arista, and after signing with Epic it was the Band of Gypsies, consisting of Nigel Swanston and Tim Cox, who helped Rozalla complete work on her debut album, 'Everybody's Free' (1992).

Through it all, her dad was her number one fan. "My mum was too - but she was terrified, because in her world the music scene was sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll," she laughs. "They were both supportive, but when I first travelled to the UK I remember putting pennies after pennies in those red phone boxes to call home, and my dad saying to me: 'Look, my girl, if it doesn't work out for you in the UK, just know you have a home to come back to.' Sadly, he passed away in 1990, but him saying that to me gave me so much more encouragement, because I thought: 'I'm going to make this work and I'm going to go back home because I want to go on holiday and visit my family, but still come back to the UK or whichever country internationally accepts me.'"

> ***I want to live my life the best that I can, do what I love and love the people that love me***

She adds: "Honestly, I feel his smiles. I feel his connection, like he's giving me the thumbs up and going, 'Well done, my girl. I'm proud of you.' And I know my dad was proud of me, because he told me. He'd say, 'You just keep doing it'. It's amazing."

And when it comes to the future, Rozalla plans on doing just that, with talks already underway for more new material.

"We have spoken about doing the next album and not waiting too long," she teases. "We've got ideas, which aren't necessarily the same as we've done with this album, but we do have plans. Honestly, there will not be a 25 year gap!" **RP**

'Turn On The Light' is out February 26. The 'Turn On The Light' album launch show takes place at London's Zodiac Bar - hosted by Cheer Up - The Ultimate Parties - on February 24. Tickets are on sale now.

Youth & love

Launching into his latest era, **Bright Light Bright Light** looks ahead to his forthcoming album, 'Enjoy Youth', and reveals why now more than ever he's all about having a good time!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

Back with a glorious bang, Bright Light Bright Light's fifth album, 'Enjoy Youth', is set to be his boldest, most playful and vibrant yet.

The Welsh-born New Yorker kicked off the campaign last month with the sexy lead single, *You Want My...*, and shared details of the project, including collaborations with Ian Masterson, Richard X and Ultra Naté.

They're a mere page in his little black book - more on that later - and ahead of the record's spring release, the singer-songwriter and musician, real name Rod Thomas, tells all about his latest era.

REVIVED

"It's a way for me to have fun with albums," smiles the performer from his NYC apartment - flanked by his cat, Sunny, to his left and an array of glitter balls behind him - of the strong, colourful aesthetic behind his latest release. A pop fan to the core, its queens of reinvention like Kylie Minogue and Madonna that, right from ▶

BIBI

the beginning, compelled him to ensure each album campaign had a unique look and feel to it.

"When Kylie did 'Impossible Princess', then 'Light Years', then 'Fever', they felt like very distinct, visual moments," he adds. "Even though you can maybe link some of the songs together, it was really cool to see, 'Oh, this is where we are now', and I thought it would be fun to try and do that, because each album is not written from the same point of view or the same emotional state, so why not just make them colourful and give them their own personality?"

Not only oozing personality, 'Enjoy Youth' sees Thomas brimming with a striking confidence and pushing his boundaries further than ever before. "I think it's the campest thing I've done," he laughs of *You Want My*... "I just wanted to have fun; I wanted it to be something silly that doesn't take itself seriously. Something to kick the year off with a bit of joy and buoyancy."

A collaboration with Ian Masterson, the track sets the tone for a long-player without limits. "I thought, 'Why not be silly? Why not have a little rap-talk moment? Why not do something that sounds like Pet Shop Boys on acid?'," he laughs. "You know, 'Why not do something that makes me have the most fun I could possibly have in four minutes?'"

Evocative of Madonna's iconic *Vogue* verse, he initially planned to shop the rap section around - "I thought about Ana Matronic, but she's a good singer and I didn't want to just present her with a rap track, and then I thought of maybe getting a rapper from one of the '90s pop bands like Real McCoy, or even Peaches," he reveals - but ultimately he opted to record the part himself.

"In the end, I realised that I've launched a lot of albums with a guest vocalist and I thought it might be quite fun to launch the album with my own voice instead of somebody else's in tow," Thomas smiles. "And like I said, I had fun doing that little rap - it was so stupid, and I felt stupid, but I really enjoyed it!"

It's a breath of fresh air and one of many lighthearted moments that characterise the record, including its title, which was inspired by a trip to Paris, France to

"The real triumph of my career is that I've stayed friends with the people I've worked with"

I thought, 'Why not be silly? Why not have a little rap-talk moment? Why not do something that sounds like Pet Shop Boys on acid?'

visit one of his oldest friends, Janice, who Thomas met on an AOL forum when he was 14, when she was an au pair. She was raised in Scotland and he grew up in Wales, with the trip proving eye-opening for the youngster.

"She stayed with this very rich family who were the loveliest people," he recalls. "One of the parents was Scottish, one was Irish, and the Scottish grandmother was staying with them one time when I was there. She was fabulous; drank a bottle of red wine everyday, fabulous woman! When we were sneaking out to go to a club one night, down the back stairs, she opened the door and said, 'Oh, where are you two going?' We were both very underage and when we told her we were going to a club she went: 'Oh enjoy... YOUTH!'

"I thought it was so funny that she was beaming, like, 'Oh, how fabulous, they're going to do something kind of naughty and fun and they can have a great night'. And it really stuck with me; it was just so wonderful to have an adult for once not telling you, 'Oh, don't go too crazy... Don't be too drunk...' To just like, 'enjoy youth', there was something so fabulous about that moment of somebody older being like, 'Absolutely, go for it and have the fucking best time'. I have thought about that moment every day since she said it, because it was just so wonderful and so genuine."

SNAP!

In capturing the essence of youth, Thomas has enlisted a heavy-hitting line-up of collaborators who soundtracked his own formative years. Jon Shave (Girls Aloud, Miley Cyrus), Richard X (Sugababes, Will Young), Babydaddy (Scissor Sisters, Kylie Minogue) and Ian Masterson (Dannii Minogue, Geri Halliwell) all serve as producers on the album - a move he says was very deliberate.

"Dozens of pop songs have sampled '90s tracks in the past year - even John did Rita Ora's *Praising You* [which utilises Fatboy Slim's *Praise You*]," he notes. "I just thought, instead of sampling these people, why don't I just phone them and get them on a song, because they're still fantastic. Ultra Naté is an absolute dance music icon and her voice is better now than it was in the '90s, which is wild. Beth Hirsch was the voice of Air's *All I Need* and her own catalogue is amazing and doesn't get enough credit, so I wanted to put her on the record. Berri, I was *obsessed* with her two singles in '95/'96 and she's honestly got one of the best voices I've worked with."

He's known Hirsch for decades. "I emailed her an interview for my student paper and we've continued a friendship and been friends since 2002," he beams. "I'm really grateful that in this career, without a label or a manager or anything, that I'm still fortunate enough to work with these people. There's no reason why any

of them should work with me. But it's brilliant that they do and I think the real triumph of my career is that I've stayed friends with the people I've worked with. I'm still texting all of the people that I've ever recorded with and I really like that."

It's not just his bonds with his collaborators that go way back; deluxe editions of the new record include early recordings from as far back as 2004 - eight years before his debut album. "I've been writing songs since I was 13 and *they* were really bad," he laughs. "Actually, the first song I ever wrote is called *Crawl* and it kind of is a bop; the lyrics are dreadful but the melody and the chorus are banging. The songs on the album, though, are from university time, and I'm going to be sharing some other bits from when I was 15/16 on Patreon. Actually, the bonus song on 'Make Me Believe In Hope' called *As If* was written when I was 17/18 - I was convinced it was going to be my big song, and it was *never* going to be."

SWEET RELEASE

There is, however, a deeper significance to the youthful throughline that runs through Thomas' latest work; back in 2010 when he was working towards his debut, he soon became aware of how fickle the music industry can be when it comes to age.

"I went on tour with Ellie Goulding, I was 27, and I was the oldest person - apart from one sound guy - in the entire touring party," he remembers. "[Fellow support act] Sunday Girl - who is fabulous and I love so much - said, 'Oh my God, I thought he was much younger than that'. I said, 'I'm not old, I'm 27', and she was like, "Oh my God, you're so old'. It was like, 'Wow'. And she didn't mean it like that, but there's definitely a stigma around whether you're too old to be making pop music. I even remember people in the industry - PR people and managers - telling me to say I was 24. Like, what's the difference?"

Within that is a sad irony that, for most of his early years, Thomas worked tirelessly to get good grades in school and university, to be able to leave his hometown near Neath in Wales. "It was very clear that I couldn't stay there as a gay man and I needed to get out," he insists. "But I became too concerned with, 'Where's this gonna get me', or 'I need to work hard', or 'I need to do this'. So the album title is reclaiming some of those moments - and partly poking fun at the fact that I'm not young anymore!"

Now, his attitude is different. "Until you're in the grave, do something everyday that makes you happy. Find those moments of joy," he beams. "Even if I've got a day where I'm doing literally nothing, I spend time with my cat, or I put on a record that I love, or I'll go for a walk and buy a coffee. Just something to remind myself why I'm on this planet."

I really wish that there was an awards system, like the BRITs or the Oscars, that only looked at work with people who are not funded by a major label or film studio

Until you're in the grave, do something everyday that makes you happy

After releasing his last album, 'Fun City' (2020), featuring collaborations with LGBTQ+ acts including Erasure's Andy Bell and Jake Shears, during the pandemic, this time around he's keen to get out and play to fans around the globe. Dates have yet to be announced, although Thomas will appear at London's Mighty Hoopla festival and says he'll be performing shows around the album's May release and later in the autumn.

Most impressive of all though is that he's still doing it all off his own back, completely self-funded and totally independent. From the music itself, to the design of the album packaging and glossy music videos for the singles, how *does* he make it all look so easy? "The way you budget for this is so different as an independent," Thomas says. "Back in the day when I did the 'Choreography' album in 2016, I remember I'd saved up $28,000 - which was £20,000 at the time - to make the artwork and the three music videos, for the PR campaign and to manufacture the record. A friend of mine was signed to a major label and she had £40,000 just for the artwork.

"I'm not saying that money is everything, but when you do have a budget so many more doors are open to you and there's so much more possibility. Creating a video without a budget is difficult, which is why I loved working with Tyler [Milliron] on the *You Want My...* video, and Tyler [Jensen] on *I Used To Be Cool*," he adds. "I have this magical little network of people who can do stuff on a shoestring and I really wish that there was an awards system, like the BRITs or the Oscars, that only looked at work by people who are not funded by a major label or film studio.

"I think what these guys create is astounding, given the fact that they only have a couple of thousand dollars budget, but they have the skillset to make that work. I think it's incredible what they achieve and I would love to know what they could do with $100,000!" **RP**

● ***'Enjoy Youth' is out May 17 on YSKWN!. You Want My... is out now.***

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

LIVE IT UP!

The summer's in sight and we've got all you need to know about the biggest and best live music events coming up this year!

PHOTO BBC

GLASTONBURY RETURNS TO WORTHY FARM, SOMERSET ON JUNE 26-30, WITH THE LINE-UP TO BE ANNOUNCED!

MIGHTY HOOPLA

JUNE 1-2

Where: Brockwell Park, London

Nelly Furtado and Jessie Ware have been announced as headliners for Mighty Hoopla 2024.

The *Maneater* hitmaker tops the bill on Saturday night, with a line-up including special guests **Kim Petras** and **En Vogue**, plus **Bananarama**, **B*Witched**, **Claire Richards**, **Georgia** and **Michelle Gayle**.

Meanwhile, *Free Yourself* star Jessie will close out Sunday at the event, following performances from special guests **Rita Ora** and **Alison Goldfrapp**, along with **Delta Goodrem**, **Louise**, **Rachel Stevens** and **Shaznay Lewis**.

"I am so honoured to be headlining the Sunday at Mighty Hoopla. It's such a special festival full of joy and fun and I guarantee I will give you that in abundance. Thank you so much. It's an important festival. They know how to throw the best party," says Ware.

"To be a headliner is a massive deal. I can't wait to bring the fun, the joys, the pearls and a whole lot of dancing to Brockwell park. Thank you so much Mighty Hoopla."

Tickets are on sale now.

BERTRAND EXERTI

TRENTHAM LIVE

AUGUST 15-18

Where: Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire

Trentham Live returns with four huge shows over the summer at the historic outdoor Gardens venue.

The 725-acre estate once again plays host to the annual event, with a run of evening shows from pop's biggest names.

Leading the line-up, **Busted** promise special guests for a hits-packed set on August 18, having just celebrated their 20th anniversary with a massive UK tour and No. 1 album.

Meanwhile, **Jess Glynne** - the British female solo artist with the most No. 1 singles to her name - will also hit the stage earlier in the week on August 16 for a huge show.

Further acts will be confirmed in due course. Tickets are on sale now.

BRITISH SUMMER TIME

JUNE-JULY

Where: Hyde Park, London

One of London's biggest concert series, British Summer Time returns to Hyde Park for another run of weekend shows throughout June and July.

Last year's BST Hyde Park ran from June 24 to July 10 and while full details have yet to be confirmed, it's already one not to be missed with **Robbie Williams** playing his only UK festival here on July 6.

"It's an honour to be back here to headline BST Hyde Park. I can't wait to see you all there," he said in an announcement.

Meanwhile, opera legend **Andrea Bocelli** is also confirmed as the Italian tenor celebrates 30 years in the game this year.

Not only another UK exclusive, the show also sees Bocelli become the first ever classical artist to headline the festival.

Further acts will be confirmed in due course. Tickets are on sale now.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

HENLEY FESTIVAL

JULY 10-14

Henley-On-Thames

Henley Festival Presented by Westcoast - the UK's only black-tie music and arts festival - returns this summer with a superb line-up of entertainment.

Headliners for the riverside gathering include **Nicole Scherzinger**, **Dave Stewart's Eurythmics Songbook**, **Gladys Knight**, **Rylan**, **Nigel Kennedy** and **Sam Ryder**, with an extensive line-up of music and comedy spread over five nights.

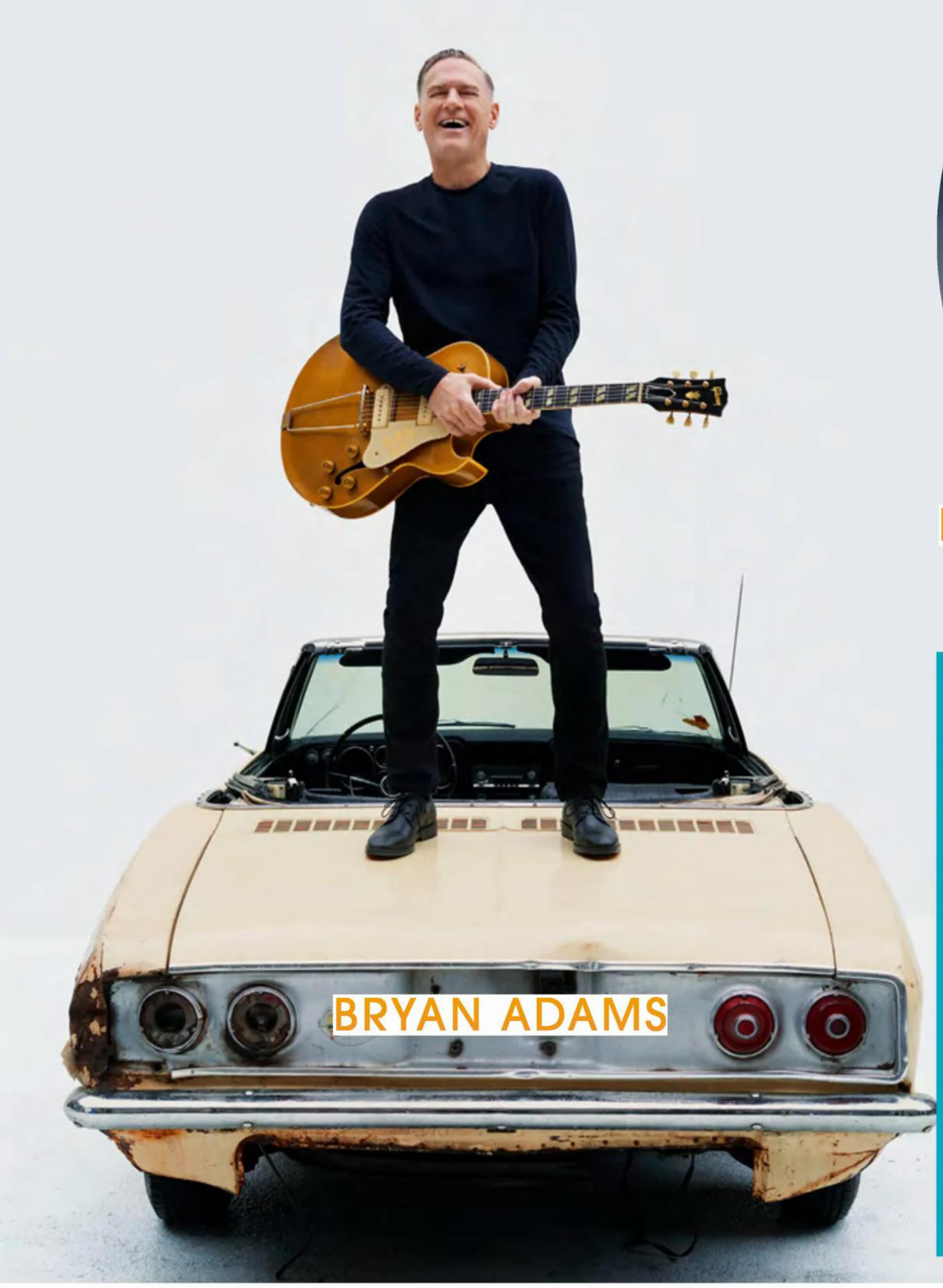
It promises a world-class music programme of pop, world, classical, folk and jazz set alongside stellar comedy, stunning art galleries and sculpture installations, as well as gourmet dining, dancing and jaw-dropping fireworks.

Founded as a charity more than 40 years ago, Henley is also supporting the next generation of talent with a RISE line-up giving a platform for young musicians, comedians and visual artists to take their first steps on stage, as well offering opportunities for young people aspiring to work behind the scenes.

Tickets are on sale now.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

RAY BURMITSON


BRYAN ADAMS

PALOMA FAITH

DREAMLAND
JUNE 8-AUGUST 31
Where: Margate, Kent

Shaping up to be its biggest year yet, Margate's Dreamland will host some of the biggest names in pop over the summer.

Having established itself as a seaside hotspot for live music, **Rudimental** kicks off the summer series on June 8, followed by a massive show from **Bryan Adams** on June 13.

The following night sees **Madness** perform, while shows run through August and include appearances from **Simple Minds** (June 20), **Craig David Presents TS5** (June 21), **Jack Savoretti** (July 5), **Suede** and **Manic Street Preachers** (July 19), **Paloma Faith** (August 16) and **Busted** (August 23). **Tickets are on sale now.**

CORVAIR, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

LATITUDE
JULY 25-28
Where: Henham Park, Suffolk

Barclaycard Presents Latitude Festival returns to Suffolk's idyllic Henham Park has confirmed Duran Duran as a UK festival exclusive.

Fellow headliners **Kasabian**, **Keane**, **London Grammar** and **Sara Pascoe** spearhead an eclectic line-up that fuses music with the arts.

Duran Duran's John Taylor says: "We are excited to be making Latitude our sole UK performance next summer. It's a great festival, and it's been a long time since Duran has been in that part of the country. In fact, it's our first time ever in Suffolk.

"We are riding high on the reception our new 'Danse Macabre' album has received and looking forward to bringing music from that record, all the way back to our 1981 debut album. See you there!"

Also on the music line-up is **The Vaccines**, **Future Islands**, **Lankum Jockstrap**, **Ash**, **Caity Baser**, **CMAT**, **The Darkness**, **Waxahatchee**, **Corinne Bailey Rae**, **David Ducovony**, **BC Camplight**, **Marika Hackman** and **Baby Queen**.

Meanwhile, there's comedy from **Jo Brand**, **Judi Love**, **Joanne McNally** and **Sara Pascoe**.
Tickets are on sale now.

DURAN DURAN

STEPHANIE PISTEL

LAURA LEWIS, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

VALLEY FEST

AUGUST 1-4

Where: Chew Magna, Bristol

Returning to Chew Valley Lake near Bristol for its 10th year, Valley Fest's first wave of acts for the 2024 line-up boasts Sister Sledge, Sophie Ellis Bextor and The Feeling.

Tinie Tempah and **The Skids** will also appear over the weekend, along with **Tankus The Henge**, **Nubiyan Twist** and **The Nextmen**, with additional artists to be revealed.

Luc Hasell, Valley Fest founder, said: "From pop to rock, disco to DJs and everything in between, everyone needs to GET ON MY LAND and celebrate our big birthday.

"Packed with wholesome fun, families - you'll find something for your toddlers, teens, parents and grandparents."

Additional Valley Fest attractions include food and comedy with families welcome.

Further acts will be confirmed in due course. Tickets are on sale now.

HERITAGE LIVE

THROUGHOUT JULY AND AUGUST

Where: Englefield House, Berkshire; Audley End, Essex; others TBA

Heritage Live has announced an initial line-up for venues - including historic landmarks, stately homes and estates - across the south of England throughout the summer.

Leading the line-up on July 19, **Madness** will be joined by **Lightning Seeds** and **Old Time Sailors** for a show at Englefield House in Pangbourne, Berkshire, following their recent chart-topping LP, 'Theatre Of The Absurd Presents C'est La Vie'.

They'll then play Audley End in Saffron Walden, Essex on August 2.

On July 20, **Pete Tong Presents Ibiza Classics featuring Jules Buckley and the Essential Orchestra** will play at Englefield, while Flackstock Festival will take place on July 22.

Richard Ashcroft plus special guests **Ocean Colour Scene** and **Tom Meighan** will then play Audley End on August 3.

Further acts will be confirmed in due course. Tickets are on sale now.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

JOHNNY MARR

SUMMER NIGHTS AT THE BANDSTAND

JULY 23-AUGUST 10
Where: Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow

Glasgow's inner-city music festival, Summer Nights At The Bandstand, returns with a classic line-up of acts.

Now in its ninth year, the event will take place across twelve days in July and August, with **Gabrielle** kicking off the first night on July 23.

Johnny Marr will take to the stage on July 25 with special guests and Future Islands will cap off the month with a performance on July 30.

Echo & the Bunnymen will play back-to-back headline shows on August 8 and 9, before **Bananarama** close out the event on August 10.
Tickets are on sale now.

THE CAMBRIDGE CLUB

JUNE 7-9
Where: Childerley Orchard, Cambridge

The Cambridge Club Festival returns over the summer with a line-up of huge dance, disco, soul and funk stars.

Taking to the main stage will be a host of international acts, including **Chaka Khan**, **Earth Wind & Fire Experience by Al McKay**, **Gabrielle**, **Incognito**, **Melanie C**, **Sister Sledge**, **Soul II Soul**, **The Family Stone** and more.

Celebrating 50 years in music, Khan will close the weekend, with managing director William Young saying: "We're incredibly excited to be back with an amazing line-up for 2024, just a few months after sharing our best-ever festival together. Chaka Khan and Earth, Wind & Fire have always been right at the top of our all-time wish list, so we're so thrilled to have them perform.

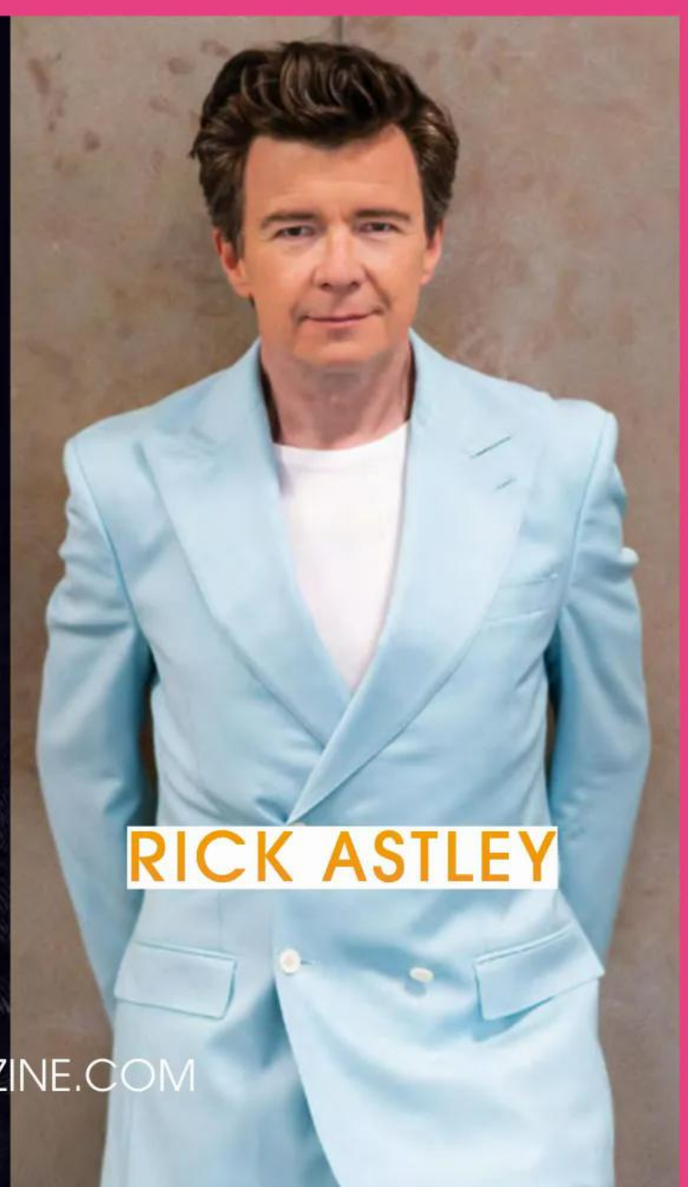
"Plus, we've been able to keep general ticket prices steady – which we know is especially important to people at the moment. With another huge headliner to announce in the coming weeks too, we're already looking forward to another wonderful weekend in June!"
Further acts will be confirmed in due course. Tickets are on sale now.

CHAKA KHAN

MELANIE C

COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

HOZIER



RICK ASTLEY

LYTHAM FESTIVAL

JULY 3-7
Where: Lytham Green

Lytham Festival's line-up for this summer includes headline shows from Hozier, Courteeners, Madness, James and more.

The line-up for the biggest festival in the North West has all been announced except for the acts performing on July 4. Special guest performers for the event include **Rick Astley**, **Johnny Marr**, **The Kooks** and more, with the event running a total of five nights.

Of the mystery fifth act, co-founder Peter Taylor says: "We still have the fifth headliner to announce. This is another exciting name and one we plan to reveal very soon alongside their UK tour plans."
Further acts will be confirmed in due course. Tickets are on sale now.

HOZIER: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; RICK ASTLEY: PETER NEILL

ISLE OF WIGHT

WHEN: JUNE 20-23

Seaclose Park, Newport

Isle Of Wight Festival's 2024 offering boasts an international array of acts with Green Day, Pet Shop Boys and The Prodigy set to headline.

The *American Idiot* group will deliver a UK festival exclusive performance when they close the main stage on Sunday night, with The Prodigy and Pet Shop Boys scheduled to top the bill on the Friday and Saturday, respectively.

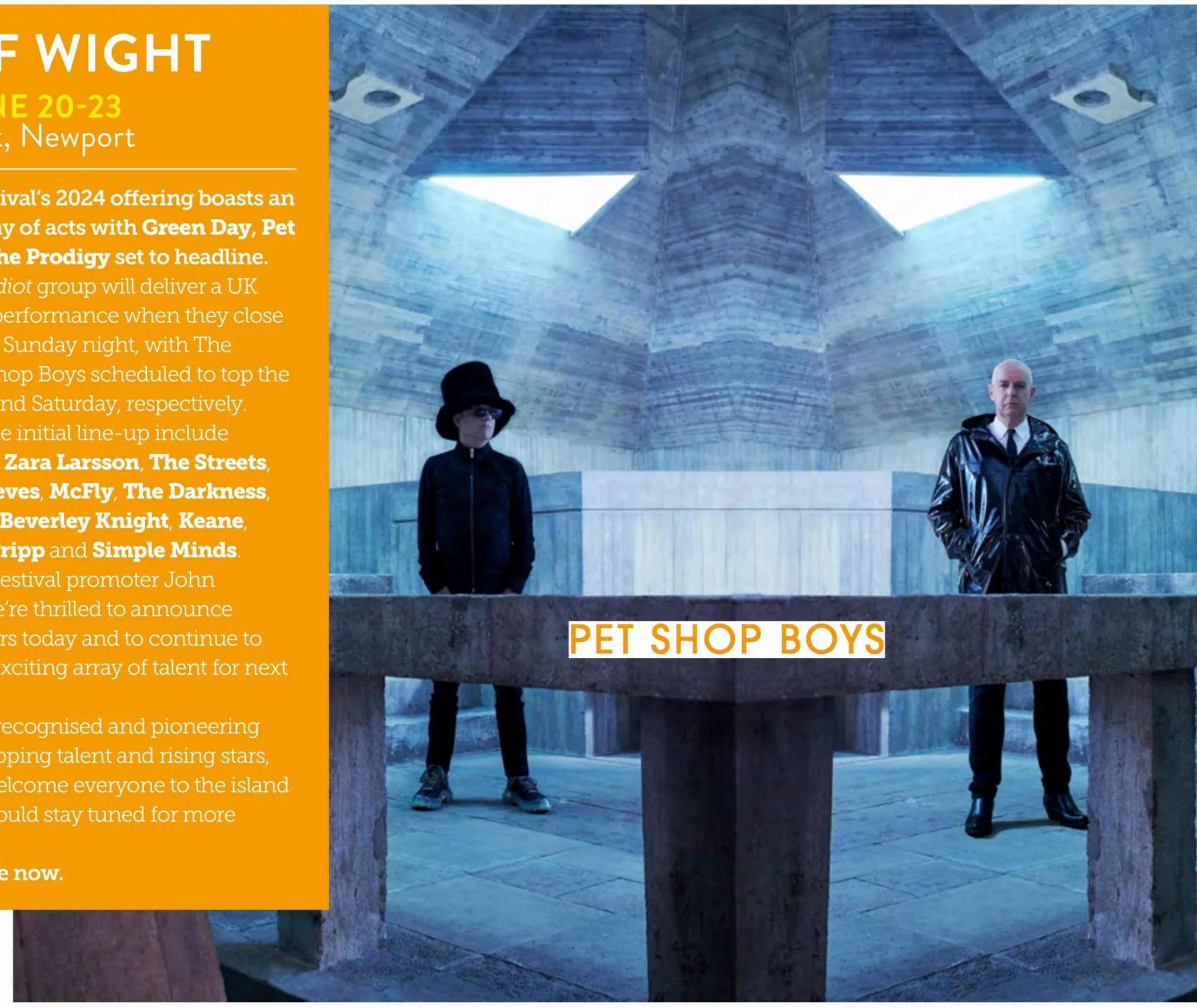
Other acts on the initial line-up include **Suede**, **Blossoms**, **Zara Larsson**, **The Streets**, **Nothing But Thieves**, **McFly**, **The Darkness**, **Crowded House**, **Beverley Knight**, **Keane**, **Toyah & Robert Fripp** and **Simple Minds**.

In a statement, festival promoter John Giddings said: "We're thrilled to announce our 2024 headliners today and to continue to showcase a truly exciting array of talent for next year's Festival.

"From globally-recognised and pioneering artists, to chart-topping talent and rising stars, we can't wait to welcome everyone to the island next year. Fans should stay tuned for more news soon!"

Tickets are on sale now.

PHIL FISK



HAMPTON COURT PALACE FESTIVAL

JUNE 11-22

Where: Richmond upon Thames, London

The royal landmark once again plays host to an extensive line-up of acts throughout the month of June as Hampton Court Palace Festival returns this summer.

The first acts include funk legend **Nile Rodgers** on June 13, followed by the UK's Eurovision 2022 entrant, **Sam Ryder**, on June 14.

A live version of the hit podcast, 'The Rest Is History', with historians Dominic Sandbrook and Tom Holland, will take place on June 16, aptly focussed on Henry VIII and the Tudor period.

The following week will see headlining performances from **Sheryl Crow** on June 18, **Deacon Blue** on June 19 and **Paloma Faith** on June 20.

The event once again takes place within the main courtyard of the Tudor palace.

Further acts will be confirmed in due course.

Tickets are on sale now.

COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

KENDALL CALLING

AUGUST 1-4

Where: Lowther Deer Park, Kendall

Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds and Paolo Nutini are among five headline acts coming to this year's Kendal Calling festival.

They will be joined by **The Streets**, **Paul Heaton** with guest singer **Rianne Downey**, and **Keane**, with former footballer **Gary Neville** also taking to the stage with a DJ set, alongside **Tim Burgess**.

Andy Smith, Kendal Calling co-founder, said: "It is with much joy and excitement we share with you today the biggest Kendal Calling line-up to date.

"We have the perfect ingredients for a fantastically celebratory weekend. But as ever the most important ingredient is you - and we can't wait to see you in the fields."

Tickets are on sale now.

LET'S ROCK

JUNE - JULY

Where: The Moor, Cookham; Temple Newsham, Leeds; Powderham Castle, Exeter; The Common, Southampton; others TBA

Back for more '80s fun over the summer, Let's Rock has announced four line-ups for this year, with UB40 Featuring Ali Campbell, The Human League and Squeeze as headliners.

Also performing at various events across the UK are are **Bananarama**, **Boomtown Rats**, **Peter Hook & The Light**, **Level 42**, **Jason Donovan**, **Sister Sledge**, **From The Jam**, **Go West**, **Nik Kershaw**, **Altered Images**, **Kim Appleby** and **Toyah**, with more acts to be announced.

This year will also see the very first ever Let's Rock DJ Battles, with '80s DJ **Pat Sharp** taking on **Andy Crane** (Leeds), **Toby Anstis** (Exeter) and **Harriet Scott** (Southampton).

Martin Kemp of Spandau Ballet will also be making his debut with a DJ set.

Further acts and locations will be confirmed in due course. Tickets are on sale now.

JACK ALEXANDER, ALEX BARRON HOUGH

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

ALDERFEST

JULY 5-6

Where: Alderford Lake, Whitchurch

Family festival AlderFest is returning to Alderford Lake this summer with S Club among its leading acts.

Atomic Kitten, **Boyzlife** and **Artful Dodger** lead the first wave of artists confirmed for the event, which pays host to various entertainments and attractions.

The Friday Night Dance Anthems line-up includes **Ultrabeat**, **Kevin and Perry**, **Phats and Small**, **Kelly Llorenna**, **Rozalla** and more.

Previous events have seen a silent disco, glitter and face painting and circus entertainment. For adrenaline seekers, the 120-person aquapark was open throughout the day.

Camping is also available.

Further acts will be confirmed in due course. Tickets are on sale now.

LEIGH KEILY

DEVA FEST

AUGUST 8-11

Where: Cholmondeley Castle, Cheshire

Deva Fest is set to return to this summer with a massive line-up of pop heavy-hitters.

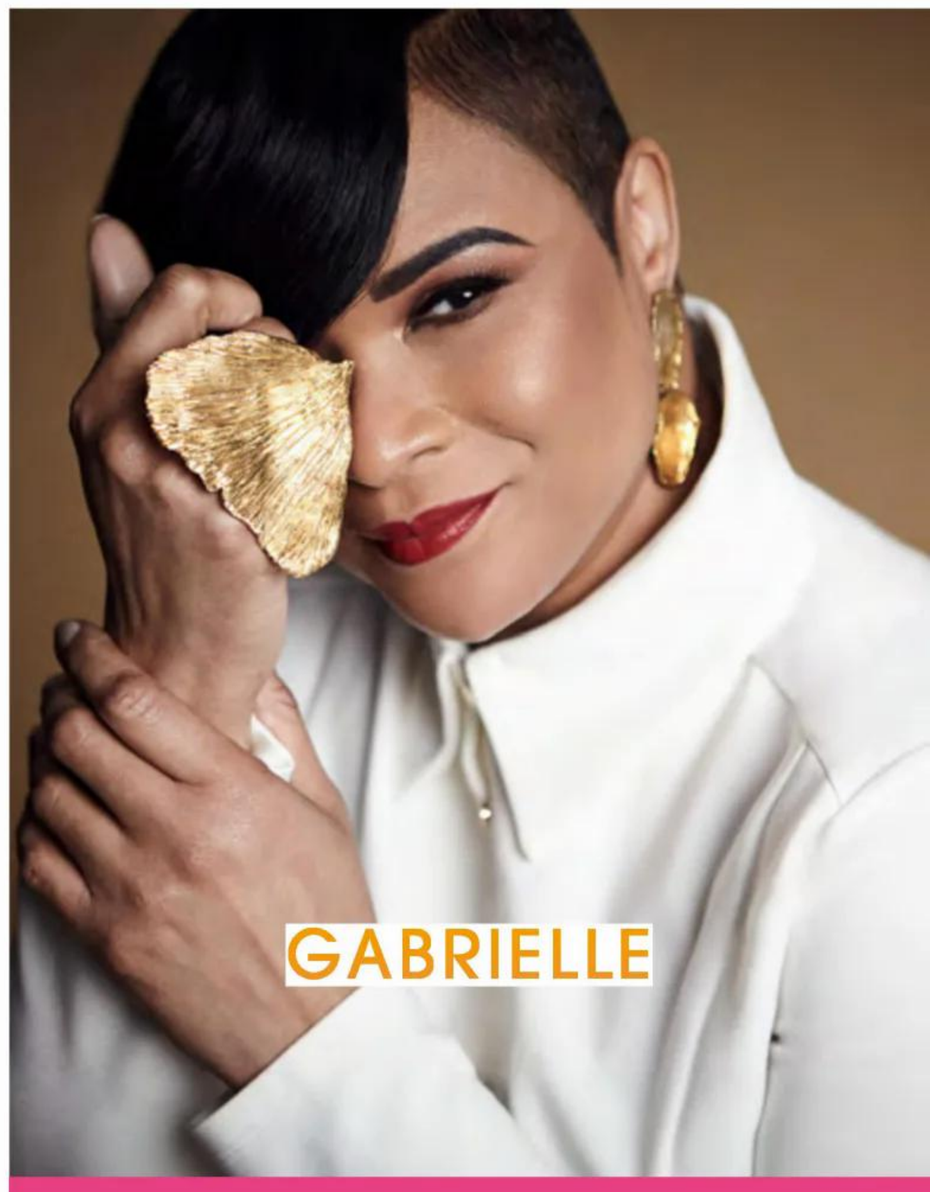
The family-friendly festival this year sees **The Coral**, **The Human League** and **Ocean Colour Scene** as headliners on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

Also included on the line-up are **Utah Saints**, **East-17**, **Rebecca Ferguson**, **Sleeper** and **Toyah & Robert Fripp**.

Phil Marston, founder of Deva Fest, said: "We're so excited Deva Fest is back at Cholmondeley Castle for 2024. After the huge success last year, we didn't think we'd be able to top it, but we're confident this is our best line-up yet."

Tickets are on sale now.

UZO OLEH



REWIND

JULY 19-AUGUST 18

Where: Scotland; Macclesfield; Henley

Rewind is back for 2024, bringing the '80s and beyond to Scotland, the North and the South once again!

Saturday nights will be headlined by the legendary **Billy Ocean**, bringing a specially created exclusive show including a Big Band, Gospel Choir and some very special guests.

Across the events, Scotland will be headlined by **The Boomtown Rats** on Sunday, with **Kim Wilde**, **Midge Ure**, **Heather Small** and **Nik Kershaw** on the line-up, while **Squeeze** will close out North on a billing alongside **Altered Images**, **Tony Hadley**, **Gabrielle** and **Tiffany**.

Meanwhile, the South edition will see **The Jacksons** wrap things up, leading a line-up starring **Peter Hook & The Light**, **Jason Donovan** and **Earth Wind & Fire Experience by Al McKay**.

At all three festivals, the main stage show will be hosted by **Jenny Powell** on Saturdays and by **The Doctor (from Dr. & The Medics)** on Sundays, with Studio 54 Live kicking off proceedings on Saturdays with an all-singing, all-dancing celebration of everything disco, funk and groove.

Tickets are on sale now.

INTRODUCING...

NIGHT TAPES

With a genre-bending mix of sounds, **Night Tapes** already have an impressive following of almost half a million monthly Spotify listeners - and they're set for an exciting year ahead!

Dream pop group Night Tapes originally started making music for fun until they finally decided to make the jump to releasing their tracks on streaming platforms.

Band member Max Doohan recalls: "The band really formed out of serendipity and it was the same for getting our music out there. A friend of mine who lived in the flat downstairs had just started an electronic music label called Breaker Breaker and when I played him the first EP he wanted to put it out.

"We always wanted to have our music on a physical format and having a label working with us meant we could make cassette tapes and later, vinyl."

The band have all been making music since they were young, with Iiris Vesik creating songs of her own even from being a child. Sam Richards adds: "When I was little, my mum used to have me and my brother lie on the floor, turn out the lights and play ambient music. She'd then make up different stories depending on which artist was playing. Sometimes that was Pink Floyd or Brian Eno, other times 'Ray of Light' era Madonna or Cafe Del Mar. It goes without saying she pretty effectively hard wired her favourite music into my head!"

Iiris continues: "One of my earliest memories was being five or something and bumping Enya so loud from my dad's Mazda 323 in the yard that the neighbours came to see what's up".

> We all had our own musical projects before we moved into a house together and started collaborating
>
> **MAX**

Both Iiris and Max met at university, with Richie eventually moving into their house after both had finished their degrees. "We all had our own musical projects before we moved into a house together and started collaborating," Max explains. "It was very natural when we started playing on each other's songs and then became a new project".

Iiris adds: "We were all doing our own separate projects and we could hear each other working on music through the walls. We'd come home at night after work, record the vibe on cassette tapes and make soft sounding music".

Their latest release, *Drifting*, arrived at the end of 2023, with Sam sharing of the song: "*Drifting* was one of those tracks that came about quickly - pretty much the entire instrumental happened in a couple of hours. I had just moved into a flat where the only room to record was this tiny alcove squeezed in next to the stairs and with just enough room for a laptop and two speakers. I remember playing the synth parts with the keyboard balanced on my lap, singing/shouting enthusiastically at my girlfriend whilst she was trying to cook dinner. I'm pretty sure she likes the song now at least. The lyrics came out from an unconscious place and at first I didn't understand them myself. But I think I've come to the understanding that they are about the usefulness of ideas - whether about living or love. Extremes are unuseful and the romantic ideas of love from the 18th century are definitely outmoded."

Alongside the track, its video is a trippy feast for the eyes, and the process was a labour of love for the group. "Like the song, the video was made very quickly and intuitively in one evening," says Max. "We shot most of it at home with a projector and then strapped 6 cameras to my motorcycle for the night time driving shots. It was our first experience working with the director/visual wizard Owain [Emyr Morgan] who shares our obsession with layering different textures and fidelities. *Drifting*

Night Tapes (l-r): Max Doohan, Iiris Vesik, Sam Richards

WORDS GEORGE McHUGH **PHOTO** MARII KIISK

is the first visual in a series that will be expanded on across the next EP".

When it comes to choosing singles for release, it's a group effort for the trio. "We're pretty lucky in the sense that we're almost always on the same page when it comes to singles," Sam elaborates. "We tend to oscillate between writing songs that are quite immediate and ones which are more textural and moody, so it's normally quite an obvious decision.

"Mostly, what we discuss tends towards figuring out the best way to weave between these two sounds in a way that builds continuity and tells a story. That part is almost the hardest stage of the process."

He says that sense of collaboration runs through the entire creative process. "The three of us all produced our own music prior to Night Tapes in various different styles. A little bit of that still filters through as generally we write each initial demo individually, before we all work together developing the idea.

"It's pretty common for us to share instruments - even across one song. I like the idea that if people listen to everything we've made, they may be able to figure out who is playing which part based on how it sounds."

Looking to the future, the band is keen to "create a world around [their] music", with physical releases and touring in the not-too-distant future. They have their sights set on iconic venues - O2 Academy Brixton, Alexandra Palace and, of course, Glastonbury - and while they'd love to extend their reach to Europe and the US, right now Night Tapes are gearing up to drop their next EP, 'Assisted Memories', due April 26, with its latest single, *Loner*, out now.

"We are in the process of releasing our new EP and cooking up as many visuals as we can," beams Iiris. "And then - gigs!" **RP**

● ***Loner is out now on Nettwerk. 'Assisted Memories' is due April 26.***

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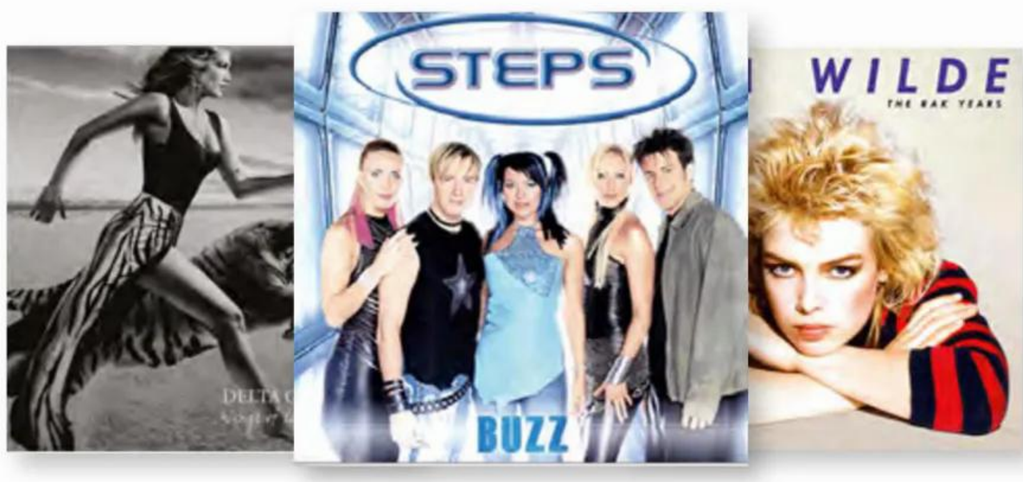
RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

85

THE GLORIFICATION OF SADNESS

Paloma Faith makes a rapturous return with her sixth studio album



84 ALBUMS

Allie X, Kaiser Chiefs, Liam Gallagher and John Squire, Paloma Faith, Rozalla, Zara Larsson

91 REISSUES

Amy Winehouse, Belinda Carlisle, Black Grape, Dead Or Alive, Delta Goodrem, Kim Wilde, Mariah Carey, Steps, Suede, The Waterboys

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

RATINGS EXPLAINED: ★★★★★ BRILLIANT ★★★★☆ STRONG ★★★☆☆ GOOD ★★☆☆☆ AVERAGE ★☆☆☆☆ POOR

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

ZARA LARSSON
VENUS
★★★★☆

RELEASED: **February 9 *Epic***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Red & Black Marbled Vinyl**

Zara Larsson delivers one of the most fun and exciting pop releases of the year so far with her third studio album, 'Venus'.

Led by single *Can't Tame Her* - a synthesiser-drenched return for Larsson with a relentless energy and powerful vocals - the record carries through the intergalactic imagery of its artwork and title, with the instrumentation on tracks such as *More Than This Was* building to a sparkly and euphoric climax.

None of These Guys is an eerie dark-pop number, sold by Zara's captivating vocal delivery - even going as far as to describe the men around her as NPCs - while the Top 20 David Guetta collaboration, *On My Love* - although a hit in its own right - is the most straightforward moment on the LP, lacking the personality other songs on the record have.

It's an outlier on 'Venus' with an anonymity that could have belong to any number of pop stars, but having proven herself to be equal parts feisty and determined countless times in interviews and online, Larsson largely sticks to her guns on her latest offering, which feels like a departure from her last release, the summery 'Poster Girl' (2021).

Instead the Swedish star opts for more menacing melodies and confident choruses, such as on *You Love Who You Love*, which is filled to the brim with attitude and a multitude of catchy segments that in a justified world would get Larsson an easy hit. Meanwhile, *Venus* is another future potential single choice, with a giddy chorus and dreamy production that helps to build the universe Zara wants us to travel through on the record.

Across the album, obvious risks are taken with unique production choices such as the glamorous flourishes on *Nothing* that feel straight out of a period drama, even if an extended run time does bear with it the occasional filler moment.

But where it's good, it's great, and 'Venus' is without question Larsson's strongest offering which, in showcasing her impressive vocals, proves this could very well be the thing that sets her apart in a crowded industry.

WORDS GEORGE McHUGH **PHOTO** COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

PALOMA FAITH
THE GLORIFICATION OF SADNESS
★★★★☆

RELEASED: **February 16 *Sony***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Eco Vinyl**

On her first studio album in four years, Paloma Faith brings her trademark drama, served up in an amalgamation of pop styles from the last few decades.

Lead single *How You Leave A Man* is an explosive number with soaring vocals and acts as a fantastic introduction to the era, with brash guitars backing a roaring middle eight to create a jarring intensity that can be heard throughout the record.

Bad Woman is another punchy number with impressive vocals and gospel choirs echoing Faith throughout, making for a euphoric and uplifting highlight, while God In A Dress makes use of Paloma's signature smoky vocals to convey a powerful message.

The singer-songwriter has always been one to infuse her artistry with politics, championing diversity and progression, and across 'The Glorification Of Sadness' she remains distinctly in her own lane - a welcome return to form after her previous album, 2019's 'Infinite Things', often didn't pack the punch of her previous releases.

There's an occasional misstep, with *Cry On The Dancefloor* - which sits in the middle of the tracklist - falling short of its potential, with a middling chorus and out of place production characterising what could have been a shimmering disco anthem.

A quick perusal of the tracklist has one song jumping out in particular; *Eat Shit And Die* is equally striking on first listen, with retro-infused production - similar to that of current chart stars Olly Murs and Meghan Trainor - juxtaposing strikingly modern lyrics for an absolute blast of a pop song.

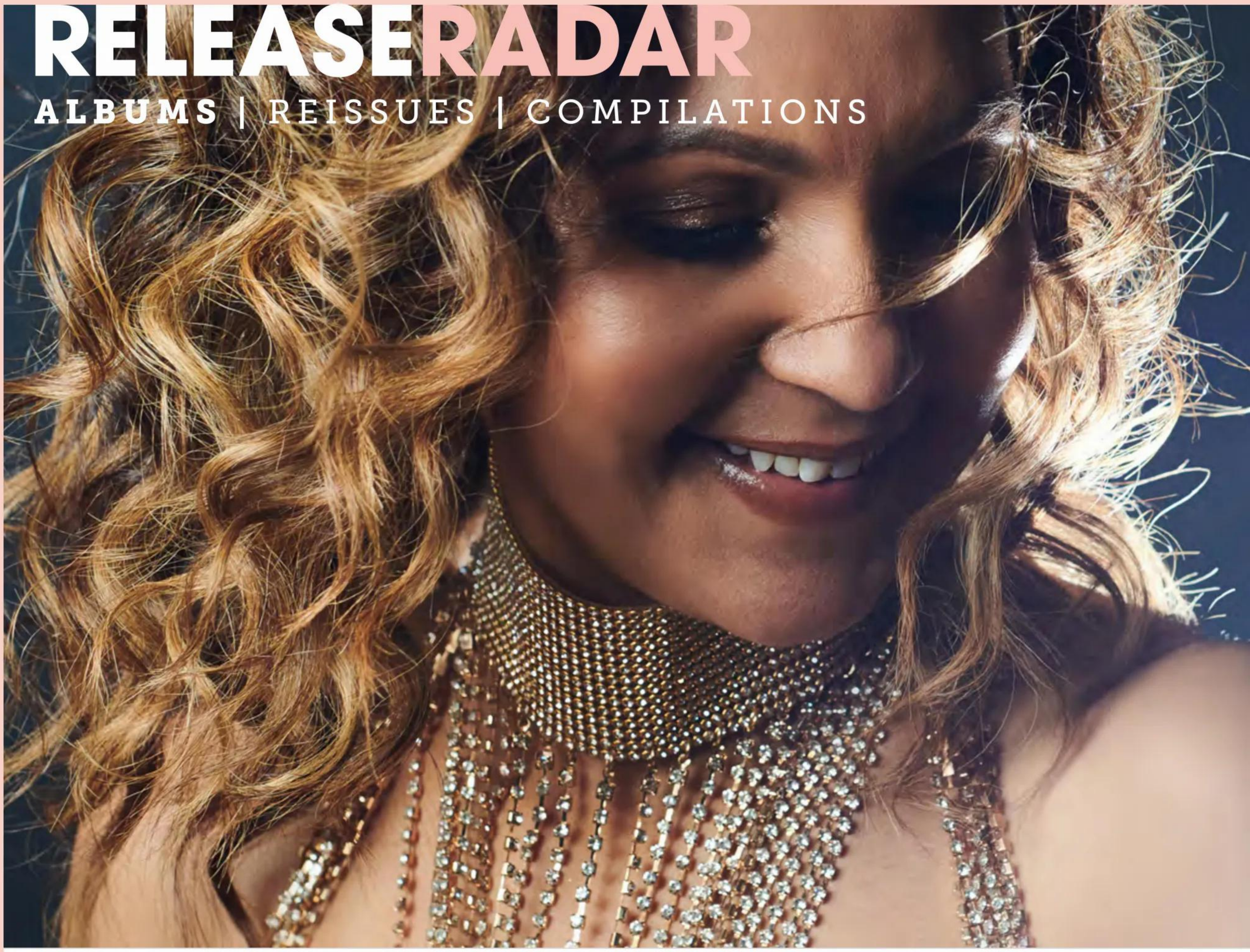
Similarly, *Let It Ride* feels like a track straight out of Sia's songbook, with building verses that explode into a powerful and urgent chorus, channelling Paloma's musical-theatre quality as she performs each and every syllable like a character in a stage play.

By carving this niche, Faith has cemented her place in the music industry as a unique and individual voice that proves the perfect palate cleanser to the rest of the pop charts. This album is no exception; confident, self-assured and authentic to her brand, with the occasional curveball thrown in to keep things fresh and unpredictable.

WORDS GEORGE McHUGH **PHOTO** COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS



ROZALLA
TURN ON THE LIGHT
★★★★★

RELEASED: **February 26**
Energise
FORMATS: **CD**

Everybody's Free (To Feel Good)... Faith (In The Power Of Love)... Are You Ready To Fly...

It's been over 30 years since Rozalla began her chart domination with a string of dance classics that went on to become '90s club staples and helped the Zambian-born singer become one of the most recognisable voices of the genre and the decade.

Now, she's back with her long-awaited comeback LP, 'Turn On The Light'; a euphoric return to form that sees the singer in fine voice on a selection of standout originals and hand-selected cover versions that radiate energy and sound effortlessly current.

It's something of a new beginning, more than 25 years since Rozalla's last dance album, but on the opening song and title track, she takes a moment to nod to the past: *'Makes all the bad things seem like a memory / As the people sing Everybody's Free'.*

Singles *Magnificent* and *I Feel It Slippin' Away* are built for the dance floor, while a remixed *Say It Again* could easily have been a 2000s pop smash. *Lovefool* fuses disco sensibilities with pulsing electronics, for a sound present across several of the album's covers.

A Chic-influenced rendition of Odyssey's *Inside Out* is an instant highlight and a breath of fresh air into the set, while Change's *Let's Go Together* is instantly timeless and Nicolette Larson's Neil Young-penned *Lotta Love* is slick and heavy with lush harmonies.

On the flip side, a full-throttle take on JK's '90s club hit *You & I* is instantly evocative of Rozalla's classics from the era and wouldn't sound out of place on any of her early albums.

There is, however, a change in pace on the more tender moments, with tracks such as Player's *Baby Come Back*, Natalie Cole's *Someone That I Used To Love*, and the original *I Want You Back* showcasing her smooth vocals and emotive ability to bring the lyric to life.

Three decades into her career, Rozalla could quite easily kick back and live on her '90s legacy, but 'Turn On The Light' is a revelation; not only is she in top form vocally, but from the song selections to impeccable production, time stops as soon as she sings and, for one glorious hour, everybody really *is* free to feel good again!

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

LIAM GALLAGHER AND JOHN SQUIRE
SELF-TITLED
★★★★★

RELEASED: **March 1 *Warner***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Blue and Red Vinyl, 1LP White Vinyl**

Liam Gallagher and John Squire prove themselves to be the ultimate supergroup as they unleash their epic self-titled debut album.

The Oasis frontman and Stone Roses guitarist were a dream pairing from the off, arriving last month with their debut single, *Just Another Rainbow*, showcasing Gallagher's attitude-heavy vocals and Squire's impeccable guitar skills. It's one of 10 songs on the equally glorious record that offers the very best of the Manchester icons.

"I can't wait for people to hear the album. I think the people that are into the Stone Roses and Oasis and that kinda thing, I think they'll fucking love it. It's spiritual, it's crucial," says the vocalist of the collection, which arrives 30 years on from his debut and came to life after the pair collaborated on stage at Knebworth.

Far from recreating the sounds of their respective acts, the record sees the duo present a sonic landscape all of their own; the stomping *Raise Your Hands* bears echoes of The Rolling Stones, channeling '60s and '70s rock, while *Love You Forever* is a stadium-sized anthem with a stunning display from Squire and *I'm So Bored* nods to the southern rock of Tom Petty in parts.

But songs like *One Day At A Time* slow things down and bring Gallagher's emotive vocals to the fore. "It was a case of trying to steer it away from all being too rocky, and trying to mix up the sentiments," adds Squire of the writing and recording process. "I like the way that in some parts, it's quite melancholic and it can make you well up, but there are other parts that are kind of irreverent, rude or crude. There's a little bit of everything in there, I think it's a really good mix. I had a hunch that we'd sound good together, but I wasn't prepared for it to be such a good fit."

Arriving so soon into their collaborative process, the album touches on numerous references and is a creative sandbox for the pair to experiment and find their mutual sound. In doing so, it makes for a set that brings out the best of both musicians and, while the concise tracklist offers a smörgåsbord by way of sounds, it's without question a highlight from both's catalogues and the beginning of a potentially groundbreaking collaboration in British music.

PHOTO TOM OXLEY

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

KAISER CHIEFS
KAISER CHIEFS' EASY EIGHTH ALBUM
★★★☆☆

RELEASED: **March 1**
Kaiser Chiefs Recordings
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP**
Transparent Blue Vinyl, 1LP
White Vinyl, Cassette

Returning with a funked-up new sound, Kaiser Chiefs are kicking off their 20th anniversary breakthrough year with their aptly-titled 'Easy Eighth Album'.

Originally launched back in November 2022, it's been a long time coming for the Leeds lads and the Nile Rodgers-produced lead track, *How 2 Dance*, is a standout moment from the set - if something of an outlier - but still tons of fun and a sure-fire highlight of their live sets for years to come.

If that song feels as if it was written with the intent of being on another record, opener *Feeling Alright* meanders through three-and-a-half minutes without ever really peaking, starting the record on an uneasy footing that reflects the band's endeavours to fuse the classic Kaiser Chiefs sound with elements of '80s pop and funk.

However, the combination doesn't completely work as the album's run feels jarring at times; appearing mid-way through the LP, *The Job Centre Shuffle* is one that the project could have been built around, with a unique production, lyricism and performance that carries through the sound successfully in ways other songs don't manage to.

As the *Ruby* hitmakers are set to hit the road throughout the spring, there are moments on the album, such as the budding pop-rock classic, *Sentimental Love Songs*, that will no doubt come to life on stage as Ricky Wilson takes command and brings an energetic edge to the material.

But in trading in big festival-ready, shout-along tracks in favour of a genre-bending fusion of sounds, 'Kaiser Chiefs' Easy Eighth Album' feels over-complicated and without a firm direction.

Moments of greatness that capture the essence of the band shine through, but the real proof of the pudding will be when long-time fans tuck into their latest offering.

WORDS GEORGE McHUGH **PHOTO** EDWARD COOKE

ALLIE X
GIRL WITH NO FACE
★★★★★

RELEASED: **February 23**
Twin Music
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Red Vinyl, 1LP Gatefold Red Vinyl, Cassette**

WORDS GEORGE McHUGH **PHOTO** MARCUS COOPER

Allie X offers up one of the most eclectic and fascinating albums of the year so far with 'Girl With No Face'.

With striking production and vocal delivery ranging from eerie to electric, the Canadian singer-songwriter has mastered her craft at creating left-field pop that feels distinctive to her unique brand.

Taking inspiration from artists such as Depeche Mode and The Human League, the album opens with the looming *Weird World*, jam-packed with personality and evocative of a stalker looming in the woods in the depths of the night.

The record has haunting melodies and graphic lyricism throughout, all of which combine to create a listen that proves captivating and mesmerising, with vocals that shift from whispers to belts, to effortlessly gliding across pulsating productions with a soaring delivery.

Off With Her Tits is one of the wackiest singles of recent years and is primed to be screamed along to at the artist's live shows. It's one of many tracks that taps into a sound somewhere between Chappell Roan and Caroline Polachek, with balls-to-the-wall and full throttle quality, all whilst remaining extremely chic and cool. *Galina* is another gem; slinky and featuring all the twinkly synthesisers you could want, it's an anthemic, late-night boogie with chaotic energy delivered in spades.

Following her 2020 dark-pop album, 'Cape God', this whole record has a glossy through line that makes 'Girl With No Face' its complete own world and era compared to her previous releases. With bizarre instrumentation choices and arresting performances, it's hard to divert attention, as each song feels like another chapter to the story of the titular, faceless character.

Lead single, *Black Eye*, is another perfectly dizzy moment that encapsulates the glitchy, digital imagery the album tries to convey and is indicative of the rest of the body of work, which sets her apart from her peers in the industry.

Exciting from start to finish and with nuances surfacing with every listen, 'Girl With No Face' proves simply irresistible!

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | **REISSUES** | COMPILATIONS

STEPS
STEP ONE, STEPTACULAR, BUZZ
★★★★☆
RELEASED: **February 23 *Demon***
FORMATS: **StepSwirl™ Coloured Vinyl, Neon Coloured Vinyl, Zoetrope Picture Disc**

The first three albums from Steps are pressed on vinyl for the first time in an array of vibrant editions.

Arriving on the back of their chart-topping 25th anniversary greatest hits LP, the new editions mark the first time the band's earliest material has been pressed on wax, with each record arriving in an array of formats.

In addition to neon coloured editions, StepSwirl™ and Zoetrope Picture Disc versions are a feast for the eyes and ears, with the designs all feeding into the band's classic artwork.

Boasting hits such as *One For Sorrow*, *Tragedy*, *Love's Got A Hold On My Heart*, *Deeper Shade Of Blue*, *Summer Of Love* and *Stomp*, each appears in its original configuration and showcases the enduring quality of the Fab Five's work.

The odd bonus track would have been nice, but with the group's more recent material making the cut on vinyl it's a joy to finally have their classic work too.

DEAD OR ALIVE
STILL SPINNIN': THE SINGLES COLLECTION
★★★★★
RELEASED: **February 16 *Edsel***
FORMATS: **27CD Box Set**

Celebrating the group's legacy, this latest retrospective set from Dead Or Alive collects the band's singles right through to the recent 'Fan the Flame (Part 2): The Resurrection'.

Collating the group's singles originally released on CBS Records and subsequently by the band itself, with selected licences that Pete Burns and Steve Coy made with other companies, the tracks included predominantly appeared on the various formats of the official international versions.

The individual, newly mastered reissues are packaged in replica mini-sleeves from across Dead Or Alive's domestic and international releases, resurrecting their classic artwork and imagery once more.

Packed with iconic hit singles like *That's The Way (I Like It)*, *You Spin Me Round (Like A Record)*, *Brand New Lover* and *Turn Around And Count 2 Ten*, it's the most comprehensive celebration of Dead Or Alive's legacy yet and a stunning presentation at that.

AMY WINEHOUSE
FRANK
★★★☆☆
RELEASED: **February 2 *Island***
FORMATS: **2LP Picture Disc Vinyl**

In line with its 20th anniversary, the debut album from the late Amy Wanehouse is repressed as a picture disc set for the first time.

Originally released in 2004, the LP introduced the soul-pop superstar to the world, with her distinctive vocals elevating tracks such as *Take The Box, Stronger Than Me, Fuck Me Pumps* and *In My Bed*.

The new edition is pressed as a picture disc, marking its first release on the format, and housed in a gatefold sleeve with the original imagery and artwork.

Images by Valerie Phillips from the original artwork shoot appear on LP2.

It's not the first time the record has been reissued and with more sophisticated masters available, there's nothing exclusive when it comes to the audio. But for harcore fans and collectors it's a stunning set and a worthy catalogue addition.

BELINDA CARLISLE
LIVE YOUR LIFE BE FREE
★★★☆☆
RELEASED: **February 2 *Edsel***
FORMATS: **1LP Half-Speed Master Black Vinyl**

Following a National Album Day picture disc release, the fourth album from Belinda - featuring the hit title track - arrives newly remastered on black vinyl.

Following similar editions of 'Heaven On Earth' (1987) and 'Runaway Horses' (1989) recently, the new pressing has been expertly mastered by Barry Grint at AIR Mastering from the original stereo tapes using precision half-speed mastering.

Also boasting the chart hits *Do You Feel Like I Feel?*, *Half The World* and *Little Black Book*, produced by Richard Feldman, it remains one of her most successful LPs and the new audio offers fresh clarity.

The album is presented in its original sleeve, pressed on 180 gram heavyweight black vinyl, featuring an obi strip and all the lyrics and credits on the four-page insert.

No additional material, but a neat upgrade for another of Carlisle's solo classics.

KIM WILDE
LOVE BLONDE: THE RAK YEARS
★★★★☆
RELEASED: **February 23 *Cherry Pop***
FORMATS: **4CD**

The first three albums - 'Kim Wilde' (1981), 'Select' (1982) and 'Catch As Catch Can' (1983) - from the British pop icon are expanded with bonus tracks in this new early years collection.

Documenting her rise through the pop ranks to become an international superstar, 'Love Blonde: The RAK Years' brings together classics including *Kids In America*, *Chequered Glass*, *Water On Glass*, *Cambodia* and the song from which the collection gets its title.

Each LP has been remastered and expanded with bonus tracks, plus Special Disco Mixes; with era-authentic artwork and previously unseen photos, the remix album features 12" versions of 10 singles, extended and reinvented in the spirit of the decade.

Six of the mixes have been newly commissioned especially for the package and capture the nostalgia surrounding the set while injecting a touch of the 21st century into the magic.

Presented in a stunning lift-off lid box with special print finish, each album is housed in a gatefold sleeve featuring the original vinyl artwork, while a 48-page booklet features lyrics, a RAK discography, rare photos and new sleeve notes.

A fitting look back at the earliest works of one of pop's all-time greats!

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | **REISSUES** | COMPILATIONS

DELTA GOODREM
CHILD OF THE UNIVERSE, WINGS OF THE WILD, I HONESTLY LOVE YOU
★★★☆☆
RELEASED: **February 2 *Music On Vinyl***
FORMATS: **2LP Silver Vinyl, 1LP White & Black Marbled Vinyl, 1LP Translucent Magenta Vinyl**

Delta Goodrem's fourth and fifth studio albums - plus the soundtrack to the Australian biographical miniseries 'Olivia: Hopelessly Devoted to You' - are the final LPs from her catalogue to be issued on vinyl.

Arriving in line with her 20th anniversary in music and following a series of career-spanning releases, the new editions complete the set and showcase her work throughout the 2010s.

The former includes the hits *Sitting On Top Of The World* and *Dancing With A Broken Heart* - which was later covered by a reunited Steps in 2018 - while *Wings*, *Dear Life* and *Enough* prefaced Delta's fifth LP.

Meanwhile, 'I Honestly Love You' includes stunning renditions from the Olivia Newton-John songbook - such as *Physical*, *Magic* and *Xanadu* - with Delta's delivery more poignant since her passing.

Each is pressed on coordinated coloured vinyl with original artwork and tracklisting, and with the vinyl catalogue finally complete and new music on the horizon, it's an exciting time to be a Delta Goodrem fan.

THE WATERBOYS
1985
★★★★★
RELEASED: **February 23**
Chrysalis
FORMATS: **6CD**

Newly curated by Mike Scott, '1985' tells the story of how The Waterboys made their landmark album, 'This Is The Sea' and its classic single, *The Whole of The Moon*.

Encompassing 95 tracks on six CDs, the set includes 64 previously-unreleased home recordings, early demos, alternate versions, outtakes, live recordings, and TV/radio sessions, covering the recording process of the album.

While the bulk of the release is centred on the creative process, the collection winds up with a stunning remastered version of 'This Is The Sea', showcasing the fruits of the band's labour.

It comes packaged neatly with a 220-page hard cover book containing a first-hand account of the creation of the album, with deep recording details, background, cultural context, unseen photographs, songwriting pages, lyrics and previously unseen writings.

Not a reissue targeted at casual fans, '1985' is more a fly on the wall account of the album making process than the usual highlights reel approach, but in doing so it offers unprecedented behind the scenes access into the making of a true '80s classic.

SUEDE
BLOODSPORTS
★★★☆☆
RELEASED: **February 23**
Demon
FORMATS: **2CD, 1LP Black Vinyl**

Coinciding with its 10th anniversary, Suede's sixth album is remastered and packaged with a bonus disc of non-album B-sides.

Arriving following the band's reformation for a charity concert at London's Royal Albert Hall for the Teenage Cancer Trust in 2010, the LP reunited the group with Ed Buller, producer of their first three albums, and marked their return to the UK Top 10.

Featuring the singles *It Starts And Ends With You*, *Hit Me* and *For The Strangers*, the album has been mastered by Barry Grint at AIR Mastering from the original stereo masters using precision half-speed mastering for a vinyl edition presented in its original gatefold sleeve with a four-page insert.

Meanwhile, CD editions come with an additional CD of eight non-album B-sides, collected together on one disc for the first time, and presented in brand new 7" deluxe gatefold packaging, with an eight-page booklet featuring all the lyrics (including the B-sides) and the credits.

A dig through the archives could have unearthed some additional rarities, but as the group celebrates 30 years together it's nice to see their more-recent outings getting another airing too.

MARIAH CAREY
MUSIC BOX: 30TH ANNIVERSARY EXPANDED EDITION
★★★★★
RELEASED: **February 2 *Sony***
FORMATS: **3CD, 4LP Black Vinyl**

The classic chart-topping third album from Mariah Carey is repackaged with additional, previously-unreleased content and a full live show.

'Music Box' was originally released in 1993 and saw Mariah adopt a more pop and R&B oriented sound, delivering hit singles with *Dreamlover*, *Hero*, *Without You* and *Anytime You Need A Friend*.

It features the original album in its entirety, with the noteworthy addition of international bonus track *Everything Fades Away*, plus rarities including *Workin' Hard*, *All I Live For (Extended Version)*, *My Prayer* and more.

Also featured is Mariah's duet with Luther Vandross on *Endless Love*, as well as two brand new remixes from Grammy Award nominated DJ Terry Hunter: *I've Been Thinking About You* and *Workin' Hard*."

Meanwhile, 'Mariah Carey Live at Proctor's Theater, NY - 1993' features her complete showcase for the first time, with the eight previously unreleased concert performances the cherry on top of this standout collection.

BLACK GRAPE
IT'S GREAT WHEN YOU'RE STRAIGHT... YEAH
★★★☆☆
RELEASED: **February 2 *Music On Vinyl***
FORMATS: **1LP Black Vinyl**

The debut album from Black Grape is pressed on vinyl following the release of their most recent LP, 'Orange Head'.

Founded by former members of The Happy Mondays, Shaun Ryder and Bez, and starring rappers Paul 'Kermit' Leveridge, Carl 'Psycho' McCarthy, drummer Ged Lynch, guitarist Paul Wagstaff and Oli 'Dirtycash' Dillon on ocarina, the record served as the band's introduction and rocketed to the top of the charts.

Containing 10 songs with influences from indie-pop, alternative, funk and disco, assembled and produced by American Danny Saber, the 1995 LP launched to the top of the UK charts and saw the group become an instant hit.

It features the Top 20 singles *Reverend Black Grape*, *In the Name of The Father* and *Kelly's Heroes*.

Presented in its original configuration without any additional content, it's far from an encompassing celebration of the album - perhaps for the 30th - but after being out of print for so long, and with the act back together, it's a nice nod to the past.

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | **COMPILATIONS**

NOW YEARBOOK 1990

★★★★☆

RELEASED: **February 2 *Sony***
FORMATS: **4CD, 4CD Special Edition, 3LP Orange Vinyl**

Revisiting the transition from the 1980s to 1990s, the latest instalment of NOW's Yearbook series celebrates an evolving chart scene.

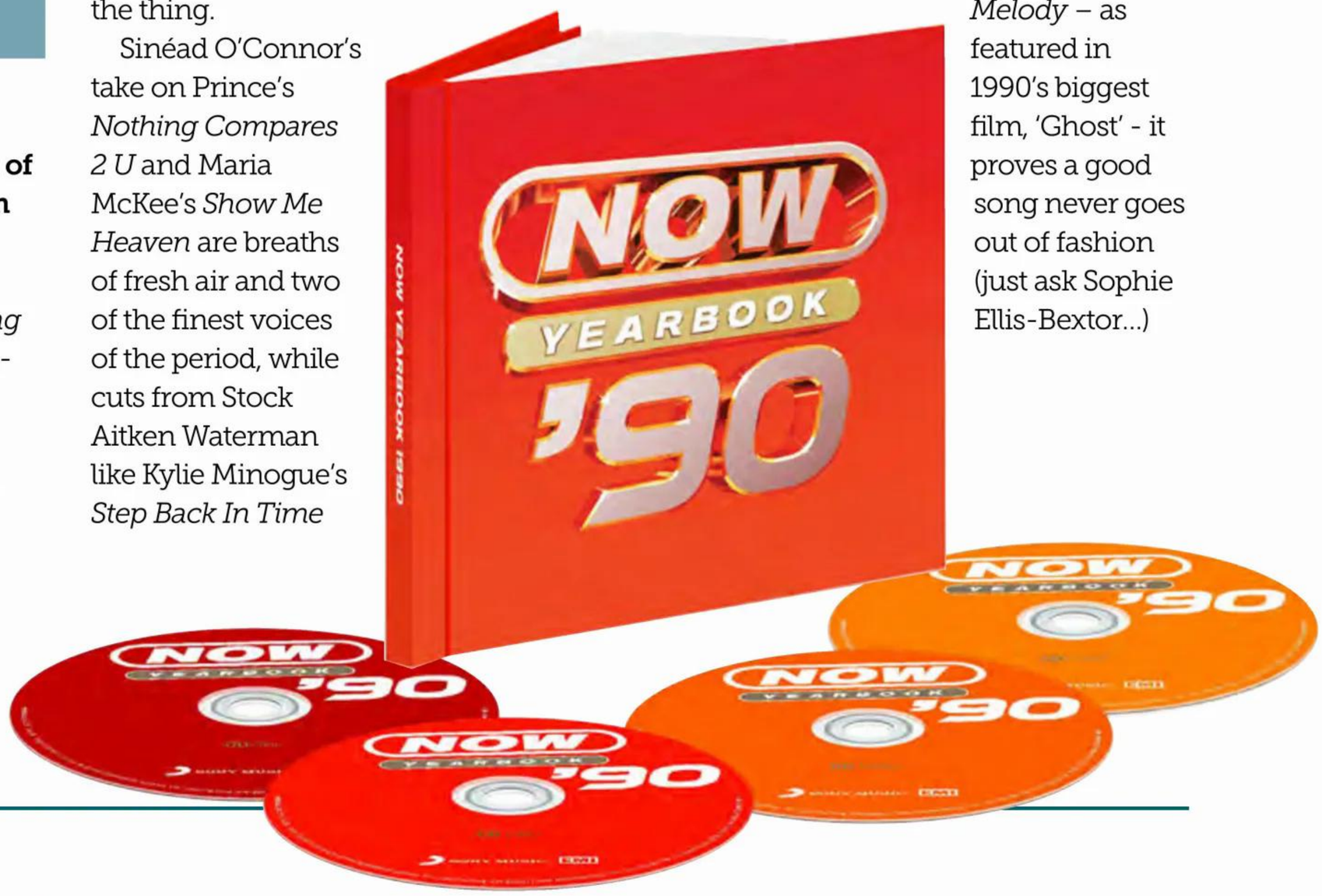
Pop legends George Michael and Elton John kick things off with *Praying For Time* and *Sacrifice*, while Roxette - with the 'Pretty Woman' soundtrack cut *It Must Have Been Love* - also continue their chart domination into a new decade.

New Order sit alongside New Kids On The Block, while anthems from Dee-Lite, Snap! and Adamski & Seal point towards the ever-growing house and club scene that would characterise the early '90s.

Meanwhile, a run of indie-alt legends including Happy Mondays, The Stone Roses, The Charlatans, Primal Scream and The Cure highlight the diversity on offer, years before Britpop became the thing.

Sinéad O'Connor's take on Prince's *Nothing Compares 2 U* and Maria McKee's *Show Me Heaven* are breaths of fresh air and two of the finest voices of the period, while cuts from Stock Aitken Waterman like Kylie Minogue's *Step Back In Time* and Lonnie Gordon's *Happenin' All Over Again* showcase the enduring appeal of The Hit Factory.

Closing with The Righteous Brothers with their rendition of *Unchained Melody* – as featured in 1990's biggest film, 'Ghost' - it proves a good song never goes out of fashion (just ask Sophie Ellis-Bextor...)



NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL COUNTRY

★★★★☆

RELEASED: **February 16 *Sony***
FORMATS: **4CD, 3LP Orange Vinyl**

Journeying through the decades in a comprehensive exploration of country's enduring impact, 'NOW That's What I Call Country' doesn't stick to the blueprint.

Legends of the genre like Dolly Parton, John Denver and Glen Campbell open the set, which journeys through the past six decades, encompassing more recent country stars such as Lady A and Shania Twain.

But the second disc is all about contemporary and pop-crossover country, with anthems including *Nothing Breaks Like A Heart* by Mark Ronson and Miley Cyrus, and Kylie Minogue's dance-pop country anthem, *Dancing*.

It's a theme that runs through the set, juxtaposing icons such as Tammy Wynette, Bobbie Gentry and Kenny Rogers with more recent chart stars including Kelly Clarkson, LeAnn Rimes and Carrie Underwood to demonstrate how country has evolved over time.

Purists may scoff, but tunes like *Man! I Feel Like A Woman* have helped keep the genre in the spotlight and, positioned alongside standards like *Islands In The Stream* and even *Achy Breaky Heart*, the more recent offerings highlight a new commercial edge.

A treat for both country aficionados and more general fans, it's a set not to be missed.

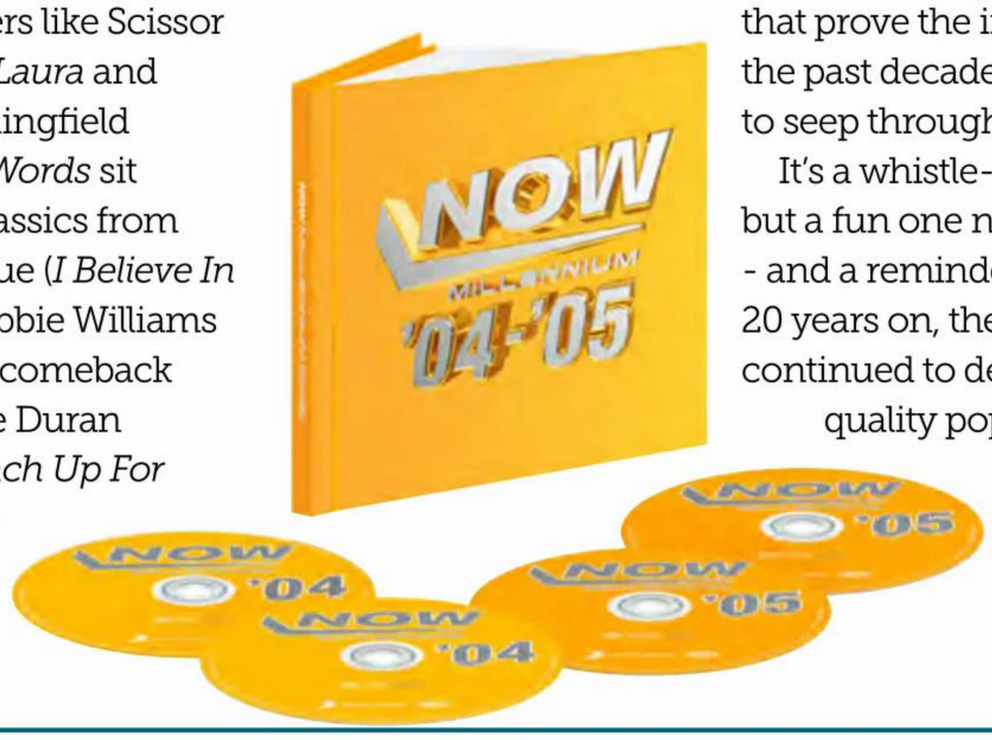
NOW MILLENNIUM 04-05

★★★☆☆

RELEASED: **March 1 *Sony***
FORMATS: **4CD, 4CD Special Edition, 2LP Yellow and White Vinyl**

NOW's journey into the 21st century continues with an exploration of all 2004 and 2005 had to offer, launching with *Amazing* from George Michael.

Newcomers like Scissor Sisters with *Laura* and Natasha Bedingfield with *These Words* sit alongside classics from Kylie Minogue (*I Believe In You*) and Robbie Williams (*Radio*), and comeback anthems like Duran Duran's *(Reach Up For The) Sunrise* spotlight on often-overlooked diversity in the '00s charts.



Meanwhile, a run of The Killers, Keane and Snow Patrol picks up on a new generation of guitar acts, while dance from *Alcazar*, pure pop from Rachel Stevens and Britney Spears, and R&B and soul cuts from Kelis and Lemar offers a neat overview.

Several cuts from Sugababes and Girls Aloud shine a light on two of the era's most successful girl group, as Busted and McFly do for the boys, but still there are selections from New Order, Eurythmics, Oasis and Bon Jovi that prove the influence of the past decades continued to seep through.

It's a whistle-stop tour but a fun one nonetheless - and a reminder that, 20 years on, the 2000s continued to deliver some quality pop.

NOW 80S DANCEFLOOR: SOUL & DISCO

★★★★★

Released: February 23 Sony
FORMATS: **2LP Yellow and Orange Vinyl**

The third instalment of NOW's '80s Dancefloor' series celebrates soul and disco classics from the decade, kicking off with Tina Turner's landmark remake of *Let's Stay Together*.

Much like it reinvigorated the late superstar's solo career, the track also set the standard for a genre that would carry through the era, with classics like Womack & Womack's *Teardrops* to Princess' Stock Aitken Waterman hit *Say I'm Your Number One*.

Getting in on the action, Whitney Houston's *How Will I Know* turns up the heat, while Lionel Richie's *Dancing On The Ceiling* is made for moving and Laura Branigan's *Self Control* infuses Hi-NRG.

Irene Cara's *Fame* leans into disco more overtly, while Donna Summer's Grammy-nominated *Love Is In Control (Finger On The Trigger)* fuses her classic sound with a funk edge as she enters a new era and decade.

Closing with a selection of iconic numbers from Rufus & Chaka Khan, Miami Sound Machine, Jermaine Stewart and Sister Sledge, it conjures a perfect picture of dance floors gone by and charts its progression through ever-evolving trends.

THE HITS ALBUM: FLOORFILLERS - THROWBACK CLASSICS

★★★★☆

RELEASED: **February 23 *Sony***
FORMATS: **3CD**

Stepping back in time to the '80s and '90s with an epic dance floor collection, 'The Hits Album: Floorfillers - Throwback Classics' delivers non-stop energy throughout.

Kicking off with Deee-Lite's psychedelic dance anthem *Groove Is In The Heart* and continuing with bangers from C+C Music Factory, Rozalla, Snap! and Corona, it's a running order that doesn't hold back.

Soulful vocals and infectious dance anthems characterise a second set, with *Finally* from CeCe Peniston and M People's *Moving On Up* - along with *The Only Way Is Up* by Yazz & The Plastic Population - crossing decade lines while sounding, 30+ years on, effortlessly timeless.

As a final disc looks to the future, with the iconic *Killer* by Adamski & Seal feeding into Guru Josh's *Infinity* and Faithless' *Insomnia*, before rounding out with dance-pop classics such as Kylie Minogue's *Spinning Around* and Roger Sanchez's *Another Chance*, completing the evolution.

A superb party soundtrack and a time capsule of a classic era in dance anthems, it may veer on the edge of obvious but after a few bevvies, makes for a crowd-pleasing playlist.

RELEASE RADAR

Coming soon...

NEW MUSIC

ARIANA GRANDE
ETERNAL SUNSHINE

RELEASED:
March 8 *Republic*
FORMATS: **CD (4 Alternate Covers), 1LP Coloured Vinyl (4 Alternate Covers)**

The seventh studio album from the US superstar - her first in four years - featuring the smash hit single, *yes, and?*

BANANARAMA
GLORIOUS: THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION

RELEASED:
March 8 *London*
FORMATS: **2CD, 3CD Deluxe Edition, 1LP Red Vinyl, 3LP Gold Vinyl, 3LP Deluxe Red Vinyl, 2Cassette**

Celebrating over four decades of hits, Sara Dallin and Keren Woodward collect 40 of their favourite recordings from across the years.

THE LIBERTINES
ALL QUIET ON THE EASTERN ESPLANADE

RELEASED:
March 8 Virgin *EMI*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Red Vinyl, 1LP Picture Disc Vinyl, 2LP White Vinyl**

Their first studio release in nearly nine years, following Anthems for Doomed Youth (2015), the 11-track LP sees the band at their most united.

SARAH JANE MORRIS
THE SISTERHOOD

RELEASED:
March 8 *Fallen Angel*
FORMATS: **CD, Standard Black Vinyl**

The singer-songwriter celebrates the lives of 10 female artists who have inspired her throughout her career.

LENNY KRAVITZ
BLUE ELECTRIC LIGHT

RELEASED:
March 15 *BMG*
FORMATS: **CD, Deluxe CD, 2LP Blue and Pink Vinyl, 2LP Picture Disc**

Largely self-written and performed, the 12th LP from the superstar continues to showcase his mastery of deep-soul rock 'n roll.

DEE C LEE
JUST SOMETHING

RELEASED:
March 22 *Acid Jazz*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Blue Vinyl**

The first new record from the former Style Counsellor since 1998 features the singles *Don't Forget About Love* and *Walk Away*.

GOSSIP
REAL POWER

RELEASED:
March 22 *Columbia*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Pink Vinyl**

Produced by Rick Rubin over a period of five years, the band's first LP in over a decade is billed as a "celebration of creative expression".

STARSAILOR
WHERE THE WILD THINGS GROW

RELEASED:
March 22 *Townsend*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 2LP Lilac Vinyl, Lilac Cassette, Sunflower Cassette**

The band's first album in six years, featuring the lead single and title song, out now.

SHERYL CROW
EVOLUTION

RELEASED:
March 29 *Big Machine*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl**

Having previously signalled the end of her record-releasing career, the country star makes a surprise return following her Hall Of Fame induction.

UB40
UB45

RELEASED:
April 19 *SRG Records*
FORMATS: **CD, Cassette**

Celebrating their 45th anniversary, the new LP features brand new songs plus re-recordings of some of UB40's most beloved hits.

GABRIELLE
A PLACE IN YOUR HEART

RELEASED:
May 10 *BMG*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Transparent Curacao Blue Vinyl**

The follow-up to her Top 5 covers collection, the soul superstar returns with her first collection of original material in six years.

SIA
REASONABLE WOMAN

RELEASED:
May *Atlantic*
FORMATS: **1LP Tangerine Vinyl, 1LP Clear Vinyl**

The first album from the Australian pop star in eight years, including the lead single *Gimme Love*.

LOOKING BACK

GIRLS ALOUD
WHAT WILL THE NEIGHBOURS SAY?

RELEASED: **March 8 *Polydor***
FORMATS: **3CD, 1LP Blue Vinyl, 1LP Picture Disc**

The original UK version of the album plus three never before heard Girls Aloud songs from the original album sessions, alongside rarities, unreleased demos and exclusive remixes.

KIRSTY MACCOLL
KITE, ELECTRIC LANDLADY

RELEASED: **March 8 *Edsel***
FORMATS: **1LP Black Vinyl**

The breakthrough second and third albums from the late star are reissued on half-speed mastered vinyl.

ELECTRIBE 101
ELECTRIBAL MEMORIES

RELEASED: **March 15 *Edsel***
FORMATS: **4CD, 1LP Black Vinyl**

Deluxe edition of the classic LP featuring remixes, extended versions, radio edits and original band demos, compiled by club culture historian Bill Brewster.

PAUL YOUNG
NO PARLEZ

RELEASED: **March 15 *Edsel***
FORMATS: **2CD, Blu-Ray Audio**

The 40th anniversary edition of the classic LP includes the original album along with B-sides, 7" and 12" mixes and additional songs.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
TIM'S LISTENING PARTY

RELEASED: **March 15 *Edsel***
FORMATS: **4CD, 2LP Translucent Green Vinyl**

A 62 track set from the 1,278 Listening Parties that took place, featuring Suede, New Order, Sparks, John Grant and more.

I, MONSTER
NEVERODDOREVEN

RELEASED: **March 29 *Dharma***
FORMATS: **CD, 2LP Splatter Vinyl**

Twentieth anniversary reissue of the debut album featuring new and never-before-heard recordings from the era.

OMD
ATMOSPHERICS & GREATEST HITS AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

RELEASED: **March 29 *Live Here Now***
FORMATS: **2CD, 4CD, 3LP Orange Vinyl**

A show comprising two stunning sets: the atmospheric (Stanlow, Our System, Statues) along with some rarities, followed by a celebration of their hit singles spanning 40 years.

BELINDA CARLISLE
REAL

RELEASED: **April 19 *Demon***
FORMATS: **1LP Half-Speed Master Black Vinyl, 1LP Picture Disc Vinyl**

The fifth solo album from The Go-Go's star gets the reissue treatment with a pair of vinyl pressings in line with previous releases.

ORBITAL
GREEN ALBUM

RELEASED: **April 19 *London***
FORMATS: **2CD, 4CD, 2LP Black Vinyl, 2LP Green and Red Vinyl, 4LP Black Vinyl, Red Cassette**

The seminal debut album is revisited and expanded to coincide with the band's 'Green Album' UK tour.

DAVID BOWIE
WAITING IN THE SKY (BEFORE THE STARMAN CAME TO EARTH)

RELEASED: **April 20 *Parlophone***
FORMATS: **1LP Black Vinyl**

An early LP featuring the provisional tracklist for what would become Bowie's 1972 album 'The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars'.

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HOMECOMING

Ahead of this year's **Super Bowl** - and, moreover, Usher's sure to be epic Halftime Show - we revisit iconic performances from across the decades!

1 Which artist performed at the Super Bowl Halftime Show in 1993 and famously jumped off the stage into the audience?

2 In 2004, Janet Jackson's halftime performance with Justin Timberlake became infamous for what wardrobe malfunction?

3 In 2001, who performed the iconic Halftime Show that featured the *Walk This Way* collaboration with Aerosmith and *N'Sync?

4 In 2019, which rappers joined Maroon 5 as a special guest for the Super Bowl Halftime Show?

5 Whose Super Bowl Halftime Show is remembered for the 'Left Shark' dancer?

6 In 2020, which two Latin superstars headlined the Super Bowl Halftime Show and brought out surprise guests Bad Bunny and J Balvin?

7 In 2012, which legendary rock band headlined the Super Bowl Halftime Show?

8 Which rapper displeased Madonna with a middle finger gesture during her Super Bowl Halftime Show?

9 Who was the first artist to perform in the Halftime Show in three different years?

10 In 1993, who became the first act to headline the Super Bowl Halftime Show solo?

11 What production technique made the 1989 Halftime Show stand out?

12 What did the band U2 do in remembrance of the 9/11 terrorist attack in their 2002 Halftime Show performance?

13 When did Disney produce their first Super Bowl Halftime Show?

14 Who chased Chris Martin across the field to kick off Coldplay's Halftime Show?

15 Which rock band performed with Bruno Mars in his 2014 Halftime performance?

16 Beyoncé pulled out all the stops during her 2013 Halftime Show with what special surprise?

17 Bruce Springsteen slid across the stage and crashed into what during his Halftime Show?

18 Black Eyed Peas' 2011 Halftime Show saw Fergie perform which rock classic with Slash?

19 In 2023, Super Bowl Halftime Show performer Rihanna unzipped her boiler suit to reveal what?

20 This year is Usher's first time headlining the Halftime Show, but who did he previously appear alongside?

1 Prince; **2** *Nipplegate*; **3** Christina Aguilera; **4** Travis Scott and Big Boi; **5** Katy Perry; **6** Jennifer Lopez and Shakira; **7** Aerosmith; **8** MIA; **9** Gloria Estefan; **10** Michael Jackson; **11** 3D effects; **12** Listed 3,000 victims' names behind them; **13** 1977; **14** Fans; **15** Red Hot Chili Peppers; **16** Destiny's Child reunion.; **17** A camera; **18** *Sweet Child O' Mine*; **19** Baby bump; **20** Black Eyed Peas

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

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